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Case: Hearing on Railroad Revenue Adequacy



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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

EP 761

HEARING ON REVENUE ADEQUACY

EP 722

RAILROAD REVENUE ADEQUACY

PUBLIC HEARING - LIST OF PANELS

Volume II

Friday, December 13, 2019 9:30 a.m.

James E. Webb Memorial Auditorium of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration 300 E Street, S.W.

Washington, D.C.

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Page 5 PROCEEDINGS 2 (9:33 a.m.)3 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: We'll get started in just a minute or two, but in the meantime, just a 5 reminder, everyone please silence your phones. 6 food or coffee, only water. Make sure that our recorder can hear you, speak clearly. I do try to 8 pay attention to him, and I may be like, so, just sort of bear with us for the benefit of the hearing 10 throughout the day, and again, we'll get started in a 11 minute. 12 We will now start with Panel V. Mr. 13 Ellig, if you'd like to go first. I apologize for 14 those that were not here yesterday. I would like you 15 to give your presentation from the lectern. And 16 then everyone is welcome to -- and we'll hear from 17 each participant, and then we'll ask you questions 18 back and forth, and members of the panel are invited 19 to have a dialogue with each other as well. Let's 20 just, you know, not get too crazy. Okay. 21 I should also say, another -- I apologize. 22 Also, there is a yellow light that will come up when

- 1 you have 2 minutes left of your time. A red light
- will come up when your time is expired, so if you'll
- 3 please complete your testimony when you see the red
- 4 light. I really don't want to cut anyone off, and
- occasionally you get a few more minutes when you ask
- for it, but never as much as you ask for. Okay. I
- yant to be fair, since that's what we did yesterday.
- 8 MR. ELLIG: Good morning. I'm glad to
- 9 have the opportunity to talk with you today. My name
- is Jerry Ellig, I'm a Research Professor at the
- 11 Regulatory Studies Program, Regulatory Studies Center
- 12 at George Washington University. My name is on a
- 13 couple of comments that were submitted in this
- 14 proceeding, one of them was cosigned by members of
- 15 the Transportation Research Board Study Committee,
- that issued that report several years ago.
- 17 The other was just mine. Today I'm
- 18 speaking solely for myself, so don't blame them, my
- 19 esteemed colleagues for anything I say. They may
- agree with some of it, they may disagree with some
- of it, but these are my own views, these are my own
- views.

	Page 7
1	In the announcement for this hearing, the
2	Board asked folks to address four topics. And I'm
3	going to address three of them, namely this issue of
4	calculating long-term revenue adequacy, the proposal
5	for a rate increase constraint based on long-term
6	revenue adequacy, and the proposal to remove the
7	bottleneck protections based on railroad revenue
8	adequacy.
9	So, let me talk about the revenue adequacy
10	issue first. I think it makes a lot of sense
11	intuitively that if the Board is going to look at
12	railroad revenue adequacy, it makes a lot more sense
13	to look at it over a multi-year period, than the
14	current annual calculation. No problem there. In
15	principal, that's the right way to do it. I don't
16	know for sure if looking at it over a business cycle
17	is the right time period, or if railroads have their
18	own business cycle that differs from the general
19	business cycle, that might be something to look into.
20	So, it probably needs a more careful look
21	there to try to figure out what's the most accurate
22	multi-year time period to get a good picture of

- 1 railroad financial performance. But looking at it
- over a period of years makes a lot more sense than
- doing an annual calculation.
- 4 However, I would also want to add -- and
- 5 this is consistent with what was in the
- 6 Transportation Research Board report a couple years
- ago, that when we suggested a multi-year period, what
- 8 we had in mind was not a mechanical calculation, but
- 9 rather a consideration of railroad's financial health
- in the context of a more holistic overall look at how
- the industry was working, competitive conditions in
- 12 the industry and so forth.
- So, it wasn't quite the same thing. It
- would be much better to do, to take a more holistic
- view, rather than just do a multi-year calculation
- instead of annual calculation. And finally, on the
- issue of revenue adequacy, I do want to clear up one
- misconception.
- 19 There were a few comments submitted in
- this proceeding that said the Transportation Research
- 21 Board Committee declared that railroads are revenue
- 22 adequate. And when I read that I almost fell out of

Page 9 my chair because I was thinking what the heck did we 2 say in that report that gave people that idea? 3 I want to emphasize that that committee did not sit down and look at railroad finances and 5 say, "We now declare that railroads are revenue The only thing I could think of is one 6 adequate." 7 sentence in that study which says, "Railroads are now 8 financially viable and no longer dependent on 9 government subsidies." 10 And if you read the rest of the two pages after that, it says, "Therefore, we don't think it's 11 12 a good idea to calculate revenue adequacy annually at 13 all, in part because it will become a temptation for 14 some type of price regulation." 15 So, yeah, there's no determination in that 16 report that railroads are revenue adequate. To get 17 an idea of the difference between what the report 18 said and the revenue adequacy determination, let me 19 give you an analogy that's not perfect. You know, 20 I'm financially viable and not dependent on 21 government subsidies. But I have a kid in college, 22 so I'm not sure if I'm revenue adequate.

Page 10 1 Okay, well secondly, let me address the 2 proposed constraint on price increases. There are, I 3 think, two kinds of problems with this. One 4 practical and one -- well, they're both practical, 5 but one is very much an implementation issue, and the 6 other is kind of a broader issue. 7 Let me address the implementation issue 8 The proposal for the rate increase caps depends heavily on calculations that utilize 10 revenue-to-variable cost ratios. The variable cost 11 in the revenue-to-variable cost ratio, is a variable 12 cost figure determined using the uniform rail costing 13 system, which treats many costs that are not, in 14 fact, variable or incremental, as if they were, 15 variable or incremental. 16 Now, this has a problem regardless of 17 whether the goal here is to promote economic 18 efficiency, or to promote some notion of equity 19 because all of the economic efficiency rationale for 20 differential pricing, if you go back to the economic 21 theory, it is based on mark-ups over what are 22 actually marginal or incremental costs, not mark-ups

- over an average cost figure that treats costs that
- aren't marginal or incremental as if they were.
- And so, you're not necessarily going to
- 4 get an economically efficient result trying to set
- 5 rate caps or rate increased caps using
- 6 revenue-to-variable cost figures that are based on
- 7 URCS estimates of variable cost. Now you may say
- 8 well that's okay, because our goal is not economic
- 9 efficiency, we're trying to do something fair here.
- Well, to the extent that the fairness or
- equity goal has anything to do with markups, it runs
- into the same problem as the efficiency goal. If the
- goal here is to have some sort of fair markup over
- incremental or marginal cost, but the variable cost
- 15 figure you're using is not actually an incremental or
- marginal cost figure, then that's going to frustrate
- the equity goal as well.
- 18 You're not going to have a really accurate
- 19 idea of what the markups are over true marginal or
- incremental costs. So, the underlying cost concept
- is a real problem. Now if that excursion into the
- 22 chilled winds of economic abstraction was too much,

Page 12 1 just remember this. 2 The famous quote from Inigo Montoya in the 3 Princess Bride, "No, now you killed my father, 4 prepare to die." The other famous quote which is, 5 "You keep using that word. I do not think that word 6 means what you think it means." That's how I would 7 describe variable cost calculated under URCS. The other problem that I see with the rate 9 cap proposal is a much broader problem than a simple 10 implementation issue and that's what in economics is 11 known as the credible commitment issue. Can a 12 regulatory body credibly commit to going only this 13 far with that regulation and no further? And whether 14 a regulatory body can do that or not, is very much an 15 empirical question, depends in part on past history. 16 Past history in rate regulation in this 17 industry is not great. And so, that's an issue that 18 deserves a lot more careful thought and investigation 19 before thinking about going down this road. 20 very optimistic that a regulatory body can commit to 21 doing just this little bit of price regulation, and 22 we promise we won't do any more.

Page 13 And by the way, that is not at all, any 2 kind of a personal reflection on the three fine 3 Commissioners who are here. I'm not talking about, you know, whether you all can make a commitment, you 5 know, personally, whether people believe you. 6 talking about whether the Board as an institution, 7 can make that commitment in a convincing way that will also bind future Boards composed of other people who we don't even know who they are. So, 10 that's the commitment problem. 11 Okay, finally there's the removal of the 12 bottleneck protection and with the removal of the 13 bottleneck protections, at least as I read it, that looks to me like a much more extensive and radical 15 proposal than the rate increase caps, because the 16 rate increase caps kick in only when the railroad 17 becomes revenue adequate, but all they do is prevent 18 the railroad from increasing rates faster than 19 inflation for some traffic. 20 It appears that the proposal to remove the 21 bottleneck protections kicks in when the railroad is 22 revenue adequate, then you no longer have the

- 1 bottleneck protections and it's easier for a shipper
- to basically break a movement into two pieces and
- then get a regulated rate on one piece, and rely on
- 4 competition to set the rate on the other piece.
- 5 So, that seems to me to be a much more
- 6 extensive form of price regulation than the proposed
- 7 rate increase caps. And I am not -- I'm just not
- 8 very optimistic that, you know, widespread price
- 9 regulation in this industry is a good solution to the
- 10 problems that you all are trying to solve.
- Now you may say okay, great, you've just
- trashed everything that we proposed, what's your
- 13 alternative? Well, you know, there's a Spanish
- saying, "Mi casa su casa." My alternative is, you
- 15 know, Mi metodologia es su metodologia. In several
- other proceedings I think the Board has come up with
- 17 proposals that are likely to be much more productive
- in terms of protecting captive shippers where the
- 19 problems are worse without creating the kinds of
- 20 problems that the bottleneck proposal and that the
- rate ceiling proposal does, namely the proposal for
- 22 an expedited and simpler way to determine market

- dominance as supplementing the several ways that I've
- 2 suggested in comments in that proceeding.
- And the proposed law and final offer
- 4 arbitration which I think if the streamline market
- 5 dominance procedure were changed in some ways that I
- 6 and others suggested, the final offer procedure could
- 7 probably be used for larger shipments as well as
- 8 smaller shipments.
- 9 So, I think you all have actually put
- 10 better alternatives out there on the table than the
- 11 rate regulation focused proposals that we're talking
- 12 about today.
- MR. WARREN: Good morning Chairman
- 14 Begeman, Vice Chair Fuchs and Member Oberman. It's
- my pleasure to introduce Professor Kevin Murphy,
- who's the George J. Stigler Distinguished Service
- 17 Professor of Economics at the Booth School of
- 18 Business and the Department of Economics at the
- 19 University of Chicago, and Professor Mark Zmijewski,
- who's Professor Emeritus, also at the University of
- 21 Chicago, Booth School of Business.
- 22 Professor Zmijewski, typically goes by

- 1 Professor Z and he's comfortable with you using that
- 2 moniker today. The Professor's presentation is
- ³ focused on putting everything that you heard
- 4 yesterday and everything that you're going to hear
- 5 today into the proper context. The basic question in
- 6 this hearing is whether the Board ought to be doing
- 7 something about the fact that its annual revenue
- 8 adequacy determinations are starting to show that in
- 9 some years, some firms are revenue adequate on an
- 10 annual basis.
- And revenue adequate, of course, as the
- 12 Board has defined it, meaning that they are earning
- 13 accounting returns on investment that are higher than
- the industry cost of capital calculated by the
- 15 Board. But to answer any question about whether the
- Board ought to take those findings and roll them into
- some kind of a multi-year average, and do something
- 18 about a revenue adequacy constraint, the Board first
- 19 has to understand what do those numbers actually
- 20 mean.
- 21 And the professors have approached this
- 22 question in a way that's ultimately pretty simple.

- What they've done is they've taken the exact same
- 2 methodology that the Board uses for the annual
- determinations, and they've applied it to a wide
- 4 range of other publicly traded companies.
- 5 And why would you do that? You would do
- 6 that because these publicly traded companies are the
- ⁷ firms with which railroads are competing for capital.
- 8 You know, a potential railroad investor isn't
- 9 deciding am I going to invest my money in Union
- 10 Pacific, or am I going to stuff it in my mattress.
- 11 They're deciding, am I going to invest in Union
- 12 Pacific, or am I going to invest in Dow, or am I
- going to invest in Intel, or am I going to invest in
- 14 Alphabet.
- They're looking at all the options in the
- 16 market. So, what the professors have done is using
- 17 publicly available data about these firms and
- following the Board's methodologies, they've
- 19 calculated an ROIC cost of capital for companies in
- 20 the S&P 500. And the results of that study are a
- 21 pretty sign.
- 22 As Professor Z will explain, over 88

- 1 percent of S&P 500 firms have accounting returns that
- would make them revenue adequate under the Board's
- definition. And in fact, the median firm of the S&P
- 4 500 has an accounting return that's 19 percentage
- 5 points over its cost of capital.
- And that's not 19 percent, that is 19
- 7 percentage points. So, the median company in the
- 8 middle, if it had a cost of capital of 10 percent,
- 9 its ROI the average company, the median company,
- would have a return on investment of 29 percent.
- So, let's think for a moment about what
- the Board would be hearing today if it's 2018 revenue
- 13 adequacy determination found a railroad that had an
- ROI of 31 percent, which would be 19 percentage
- 15 points over the most recent industry cost of capital.
- 16 But that -- such a return would not be unusual. It
- wouldn't even be high.
- That's just the median of the S&P 500.
- 19 The facts that most of the firms which railroads are
- 20 competing for capital are wildly revenue adequate
- under the way that the Board is measuring it today,
- 22 is strong evidence that the annual determination for

- 1 railroads, are not currently giving the Board
- 2 meaningful information.
- 3 88 percent of the S&P 500 is achieving
- accounting returns at the revenue adequacy level, and
- 5 many of them are vastly exceeding that level. It's
- 6 obviously not true that revenue adequacy, as the way
- 7 the Board is measuring it now, is showing unusually
- 8 high profits that justify extraordinary regulatory
- ⁹ intervention.
- 10 I'm going to turn it over to the
- 11 professors shortly. I did want to start by briefly
- 12 reviewing the statutory framework governing revenue
- 13 adequacy. So, first I'm putting up the familiar
- 14 text of 10704(a)(2) and (3).
- 15 You know, Congress gave the Board two
- duties related to revenue adequacy. And the first is
- 17 a duty to assist all railroads in becoming revenue
- 18 adequate. The Board is instructed to make an
- 19 adequate and continuing effort to assist carriers in
- 20 attaining revenue levels at the revenue adequacy
- 21 level. And that the annual determinations flow out
- of this duty -- flow out of this same text the STB is

- instructed annually to determine which carriers are
- ² earning adequate revenues.
- So, no indication here of regulatory
- 4 adequacy constraint, but there is a duty to
- 5 accurately measure revenue adequacy so that the
- 6 Board can carry out its duty to assist all railroads
- ⁷ in becoming revenue adequate.
- 8 Congress also gave the Board clear
- 9 guidance about what revenue adequacy is supposed to
- 10 mean. The adequate revenues are defined to include a
- reasonable and economic profit or return, or both on
- capital employed in the business. So, that is not an
- 13 accounting return, that is an economic profit on
- 14 capital.
- 15 And as the professors will explain, those
- 16 are not the same thing. And Congress made clear the
- 17 adequate revenues have to enable railroads to
- 18 successfully compete for capital. So, revenues have
- 19 to be at levels that permit the raising of needed
- equity capital, and railroads need to be able to
- 21 attract and retain capital in amounts that are
- 22 adequate to provide a sound transportation system.

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1	So, in light of this text, we think that
2	the evidence that the professors are going to present
3	about the way that railroad accounting returns
4	compare to accounting returns for the companies with
5	which they compete for capital, is highly relevant to
6	any assessment of whether railroads have actually
7	reached revenue adequacy, as Congress has defined it.
8	And another conclusion that jumps out from
9	the statutory text is that Congress has told the
10	Board to assist railroads in earning returns that
11	will let them successfully compete for capital and
12	not to regulate rates in a way that would preclude
13	them from reaching that goal.
14	So, as the data the professors will
15	present shows, railroads aren't actually earning
16	returns that are abnormally high, or that are out of
17	line with what other investment options are earning.
18	On the contrary, their accounting returns, net of the
19	cost of capital are well below the median.
20	If the Board suggests that nonetheless, it
21	will act to stop railroads from earning above the
22	level that the Board currently deems to be revenue

Page 22 1 adequate, that will strongly discourage investors 2 from placing their capital with railroads because it 3 would signal that this Agency will not let railroads 4 earn what other companies in the market earn. 5 And we'd submit that that's exactly the 6 opposite of what Congress has instructed this Agency 7 to do. With that statutory background, I will turn 8 the presentation over to Professor Murphy. PROFESSOR MURPHY: Matt, thank you very 10 much and thank you to the Board for allowing me to 11 speak here today. Matt covered a lot of what I 12 wanted to say in beginning remarks. Let me just go 13 back over a few things to make it clear. Revenue 14 adequacy, at least in principle, tries to address the 15 question of whether railroads are earning sufficient 16 returns to attract and retain capital needed to make 17 investments to improve and maintain their networks, 18 and provide competitive service to their customers. 19 The revenue adequacy that we use is, of 20 course a measure. A measure is usually in economics,

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and in most places, an imperfect proxy for what we

are trying to actually understand. And we know some

- of the reasons for that. We know, for example, that
- the kinds of measures used here are based on
- historical cost, appreciated historical cost.
- 4 They're also backward looking, not forward looking,
- 5 so there's differences between what we measure and
- 6 the underlying economic concepts we're interested in.
- 7 That's not the end though, that doesn't
- 8 say throw up my hands, I can't do anything because
- 9 what I have isn't what I would like to have.
- 10 Instead, we often say well geez, can I calibrate into
- some way, my measure that I do have to make sure I
- understand how to use it, what I can learn from it
- and what it's telling me.
- And indeed, in this context, what we'd
- 15 like to be able to do is understand how to interpret
- both the level and any variation or changes that we
- 17 see in our measure and know what to make of those.
- 18 Probably the best way to do that, is to compare my
- measure or evaluate my measure, in the marketplace in
- which I want to apply it.
- And in what we call context. And
- 22 probably, the first and foremost reason for doing

- that is to compare what we see for the railroads, to
- what we see for the very firms that the railroads
- 3 need to compete with for capital. And then we chose
- 4 a broad set of firms from the S&P 500 as
- 5 representative of the marketplace out there.
- We're going to use the same measures, but
- ⁷ for an alternative group of firms, being the firms
- 8 that the railroads have to compete with. And if you
- 9 think the measures we see for the railroads is
- telling you yes, they can compete or no, they can't.
- 11 That has to be evaluated relative to what those same
- measures show for others.
- Second, we can look at that population and
- learn a lot about how that measure performs in actual
- practice. Does it tend to be higher? Do the
- 16 measured rates of return tend to be higher than the
- 17 return on capital in a competitive marketplace, or do
- they tend to be roughly equal?
- We can also learn do they vary. Do they
- vary a lot? How much can we make out of a given
- variation that we see? And therefore, that's why we
- 22 undertook the exercise we did, to really allow us to

- ¹ understand the measures that we're using. And the
- best way we see it, is to understand how they perform
- in actual practice, and we have a nice laboratory for
- 4 that, namely the firms in the S&P 500 for which we
- 5 can make the exact same calculations.
- And Matt has already told you somewhat
- about the results, but Mark is going to go in much
- 8 greater detail about those results. So, let me turn
- 9 it over to Mark. He's going to go through the
- 10 results, and I'll come back later and maybe make a
- 11 few more comments.
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Thank you. Thank you for
- the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm not an
- 14 anti-trust economist, that's not what I do. I'm a
- 15 financial analyst evaluation person. I was at the
- 16 University of Chicago for 30-some years, and that's
- what I taught, financial analysis valuation,
- 18 financial strategy, both in accounting and finance.
- So, I come at this from a different
- 20 perspective. And what I'm going to do today is I
- have four parts to my part of my presentation here.
- 22 First, is just to bring out the economic research

- 1 that has been conducted on how well accounting rates
- of return predict economic rates return, or measure
- 3 economic rates return.
- 4 And the literature is overwhelming. I'm
- 5 going to tell you they don't. They're a very, very
- 6 poor measure and you shouldn't use them as a direct
- 7 proxy. That doesn't help you very much. I heard
- 9 yesterday, "Put up or shut up." So, what we're going
- 9 to put up then is here's an alternative analysis, a
- 10 standard analysis that is conducted by financial
- 11 analyst and valuation people.
- I have a book -- textbook on valuation.
- 13 It is Chapter 2 of our book, "How do you conduct a
- 14 financial analysis of a company or industry to see
- 15 how well it's doing." And it's relative financial
- 16 performance. It's always looking at the company
- 17 relative to another group of companies because the
- 18 information that you have based on accounting data
- 19 are very, very noisy.
- They're not measuring that exact economic
- 21 concept. So, you want to put it into perspective.
- 22 Then the next two parts of my analysis are just first

- 1 to use the STB's definition of the rate of return on
- invested capital, and conduct the financial analysis.
- 3 And then the last part of my presentation is to
- 4 propose an alternative to what you currently use as a
- 5 rate of return on invested capital and conduct a
- 6 financial analysis on that metric.
- 7 So, I'll start with the economic
- 8 literature and these were Kevin's slides. But here's
- 9 the economic literature. It started in the 1960's,
- 10 so it's not new. This is not a new topic. Business
- schools started incorporating economic research in
- the late 1950s and the 1960s, that's when economics
- 13 entered into business within the business schools.
- 14 And that research, all of a sudden,
- 15 started focusing on companies that are using
- 16 accounting data to make investment decisions, how
- well do those accounting data actually measure the
- economic concepts? And in 1960's-1970's the results,
- 19 every paper said not very well.
- Then the anti-trust economists got a hold
- of this result, and they said well, we're using
- 22 accounting rates of return for anti-trust litigation.

- 1 Should we be doing that? So, there's a whole series
- of literature in the 1980's going into the 1990's on
- 3 that topic. And the conclusion was don't use
- 4 accounting rates of return as measures of economic
- 5 rates of return because they're so noisy and they
- 6 just don't measure it well.
- 7 And I have a quote here from Fisher
- 8 McGowan in 1983, this is on the anti-trust
- 9 literature. And what they say there, and you can
- 10 read it here, there is no way in which one can look
- at accounting rates of return and infer anything
- 12 about relative economic profitability.
- Economists and others who believe that
- 14 analysis of accounting rates of return will tell them
- much are deluding themselves. And that's well
- 16 accepted. So, if you look -- I probably worked on
- more than 20 cases with the DOJ and the FTC, and on
- 18 mergers and acquisitions and anti-trust.
- I'm not an anti-trust economist. I'm
- 20 brought in to look at accounting data and try to
- 21 measure economic rates of return and never have I
- used, or have seen anybody else use, accounting rates

- 1 of return as measures of economic rates of return.
- Nobody does that in the anti-trust litigation
- 3 framework.
- So, what can you do? Well, I think you
- 5 can conduct a basic financial analysis just to put it
- into perspective. So, I'm going to come back to this
- ⁷ slide, but I'm just going to go here to what do we do
- 8 in financial analysis? We calculate a measure of
- ⁹ financial performance. So, for the STB it's a rate
- 10 of return on invested capital minus the cost of
- 11 capital. That controls for risk.
- So, that's a good way to think about
- measure of financial performance, and now we're just
- going to compare it to another set of firms, that's
- 15 all we're going to do. So, how do we do that?
- Well, first we're going to use your formula -- the
- 17 STB's formula.
- The numerator is the measure of earnings.
- 19 The denominator is a measure of invested capital and
- 20 I'll just talk about those briefly. We measured what
- you measure. The numerator it really starts with
- operating income after tax, and you make some

Page 30 1 adjustments for interest on some cash, very small 2 adjustment. 3 You take out any non-railway income to 4 just make sure it's all railway. And it's just a 5 standard operating income after tax measure that is 6 used in the numerator of your calculation for ROIC. 7 The denominator, and I don't have averages here, but 8 this is done on an average basis, which you should 9 do. 10 The denominator, typically if you think 11 about invested capital, you look at the right-hand 12 side of the balance sheet, you get debt and preferred 13 stock and common equity. However, the STB's 14 concerned with not the consolidated entity, the STB 15 is concerned with the railroad assets. So, instead 16 of looking at the right-hand side of the balance 17 sheet, you go to the left-hand side, the asset side 18 and you pick off property, plant and equipment, net 19 of the accumulated free shakes in the amortization. 20 You have a calculation for working 21 capital, which is a fairly tedious calculation, but

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it's a fine calculation. And then you have any

- 1 affiliate assets that are railway assets affiliate.
- 2 Affiliates are not consolidated, so their assets
- don't appear on the railway, on the company's assets.
- 4 So, you're going to actually get those assets and put
- 5 them on the books, all fine.
- The one thing that's done in this
- 7 calculation that I'll explain in more detail later
- 8 that I don't understand, and there's history to all
- 9 of this, and I don't have all the history here, so I
- 10 know it's been around for a long time. But then
- there's a deduction for deferred income tax. It says
- deferred income tax credits.
- 13 That's deferred to income tax liabilities.
- 14 Deferred income tax liabilities represent just
- 15 quickly, you have a set of financial statements that
- have assets minus accumulated depreciation, that's
- 17 net assets.
- Taxes have a tax basis and there's assets
- 19 and there's accumulated depreciation and there's the
- 20 tax basis of those assets. The tax basis of those
- 21 assets do not equal the accounting. Accountants
- 22 figure out well what's the potential tax effect of

- that, and they take that difference and they put it
- on the balance sheet as a deferred tax liability.
- 3 That's in a nutshell that would entail a three hour
- 4 lecture, deferred income taxes.
- 5 So, what are you doing when you deduct
- 6 deferred income taxes? What you're doing is you're
- ⁷ taking the accounting based numbers and you're making
- 8 them more like tax base numbers, so the numerator is
- 9 based on generally accepted accounting principles and
- 10 the denominator now, you're moving towards tax based
- 11 rather than accounting based.
- 12 And that would be fine if you think that
- 13 for some reason tax based depreciation, which is
- 14 accelerated depreciation, represents economic
- depreciation, but nobody thinks that. Hotelling,
- famous economist back in 1925, explained what
- 17 economic depreciation was, and it's essentially the
- 18 most simple way to explain it -- it's something very
- 19 similar to changes in replacement cost.
- 20 And that's economic depreciation. What
- the tax courts do, or what the tax rules require is
- 22 nothing like that. So, I would disagree with that

- 1 particular adjustment but I'm using it. I'm going to
- use exactly your definition in what I'm going to show
- you.
- So, now we have the analysis, railroads
- 5 versus S&P 500 and other companies, and we have your
- 6 definition that we're using and now we're going to
- 7 say well what firms did we look at and over what
- 8 time period?
- 9 The time period oh, sorry. Cost of
- 10 equity, forgot about that. Cost of equity -- you
- 11 have a standard, STB has a standard cost of equity or
- 12 cost of capital calculation, cost of equity, two
- methods, standard methods, cost of debt and deferred
- weighted by the capital structure that's a standard
- 15 calculation in every corporate finance book, so
- there's nothing really different about that.
- So, the comparison is the rate of return
- on invested capital minus this cost of capital. The
- 19 cost of capital is fairly standard for the most part.
- 20 So, now what are we going to look at? The time
- 21 period that we look at is 2006 through 2018. Why
- 22 2018? The last data that we have.

Page 34 1 Why 2006? A couple years before the 2 financial crisis, so I figured we should go before 3 the financial crisis, you know, no magic to those 4 The four railroads that are publicly traded years. 5 are in the S&P 500, so I choose the S&P 500 after 6 talking with Kevin, to use, although I exclude two 7 groups of firms. 8 One is financial institutions because 9 they're so highly levered, and the other would be 10 real estate companies because again, they are quite 11 highly levered, so they operate differently. 12 turns out that if I showed you the analysis with all 13 the S&P 500, or this set, it's not -- the message is 14 the same, there's not a big difference. 15 So, that -- those exclusions don't really 16 The railroads are also part of the 17 industrial sector, so instead of looking at the 18 entire S&P 500 without those two groups, we look at 19 just the industrial sector, so that's about out of 20 the 400 companies that are not financial institutions 21 or real estate companies, that gets us down to about 22 60 companies in the S&P 500 roughly, ballpark.

	Page 35
1	And then lastly, the railroads provided us
2	customers in the S&P 500, and I asked for customers
3	as well as revenues and we calculated combined
4	revenues of a million dollars. It seems like a
5	substantial amount of shipments, and we just have
6	another sample that is the railroad's customers.
7	So, I have the STB definition of this
8	I'm going to just call it financial performance, ROIC
9	minus cost of capital, and we're going to look at
10	this on three groups. So, I'll present now three
11	slides. Each slide is just a slide on each one of
12	these groups.
13	The first slide, the dotted line
14	represents the median year by year in each year of
15	this particular group. And this group would be all
16	S&P 500 companies, but not financial institutions and
17	real estate companies. So, it's 400 plus companies.
18	The red line represents the weighted
19	average railroad. And this is the STB definition of
20	ROIC minus the STB definition of cost of capital, for
21	all of these companies. And you can hear what Matt
22	said, there's a 19 percent, and I call it a delta, 19

- percent median -- that's the average over this entire
- period. The median performance of the S&P 500 group,
- is 19 percent above their cost of capital.
- 4 The railroads is about half a percent over
- 5 their cost of capital. These are facts. You know,
- 6 this is just a fact. Next group, industrial. The
- ⁷ industrials, and this is about 60 companies of which
- 8 the railroads are a part. The industrials actually
- 9 performed a little better. Their median is about 22
- 10 percent over this period.
- The railroads are the same. So, the
- industrial group's actually a little bit better. If
- we look at the customers, the customers they're
- different. The customers only have, if you look
- 15 here, they have a 9 percent, the median customer has
- a 9 percent ROIC above their cost of capital.
- So, it's lower -- about 10 percent lower
- and the railroad's is the same. So, we have three
- 19 different groups, and you see in every time the
- 20 railroads are performing far below the median of any
- of these groups. And the way you conduct financial
- 22 analysis, you have a time series of data, and you

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 m l}$ combine a time series with the cross section with
- other companies, and you really try to figure out
- because these are noisy signals, what's happening to
- 4 that particular company based on the trends of the
- 5 company, the trends of the comparable group, and
- 6 where this company fits in the distribution.
- And you can see, based on all three of
- 8 these groups, the railroads fit at the bottom of the
- 9 distribution. And Kevin, and I have three more
- 10 slides to show you, or four more slides, but Kevin,
- do you want to just relate this back to what you were
- 12 talking about?
- MR. MURPHY: Yeah, what I said earlier,
- 14 you know, it was important to view these measures in
- 15 context. And remember, we're talking about how these
- measures performed in practice. But that's what we
- have to work with, so that's what's important to
- understand.
- And I think what's clear here when you
- 20 look at the data, is that rather than think about
- 21 passing above zero is somehow this threshold that
- 22 suddenly they make a lot of which side of that zero

- line you're on, once you look at the distribution for
- 2 companies as a whole, you realize there's nothing
- magical about that zero number.
- Indeed, the median company is far above
- 5 there and indeed, in this chart here, 80 percent and
- 6 some of the other charts, more than that percent of
- 7 companies are above that zero line. So, try to
- 8 attach a lot of significance or saying wow, something
- 9 happened when we went from one side to the other,
- 10 make a big deal out of that, I think is something you
- would change your view on, I think, once you've
- 12 looked at the broader set of data.
- I think the other one is just how much
- variation there is in these measures across
- 15 companies. And how much variation there is over
- time. As you can see, these are not constants either
- 17 across companies or across time and therefore
- 18 fluctuations or variations you see for the railroad,
- 19 need to be viewed in that context as well.
- So, both in terms of the level, railroads
- tend to be quite low relative to the average, even at
- 22 the levels they're at today. And secondly, that

- there's a lot of variation out there and therefore,
- 2 having a bright line at any given level, wouldn't --
- doesn't seem to be fit with the actual empirical
- 4 realities of these measures.
- 5 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Thanks Kevin. I just went
- 6 back to the S&P 500 slide for a moment. And you'll
- ⁷ see in the box off to the right, you'll see at the
- 8 bottom of that box, on average, 88 percent of the S&P
- 9 500 companies had an ROIC minus the cost of capital
- that's greater than zero.
- Does that mean that 88 percent during this
- 12 time period, every year across the 400 companies,
- they're earning more than their cost of capital? And
- 14 $\,$ the answer is no. That's not what it means. What
- 15 it means is based on this definition with all the
- limitations of accounting data, using ROIC, relative
- 17 to this cost of capital definition, this is the
- information that we have.
- To interpret that as the S&P 500 over all
- these years is earning more than its cost of capital
- every year is just over interpreting the data. The
- 22 data can't tell you that much information. And I'll

- 1 give you an example. I think everybody here is old
- enough, so you remember 2009 pretty well.
- It wasn't -- companies weren't doing so
- 4 well. In that year, 73% of these companies earned
- 5 more than their cost of capital according to this
- 6 metric. Well, we know that's not true. We know
- ⁷ that they took it pretty hard and that was a very
- 8 difficult time for them. And the delta difference,
- 9 instead of being 19 percent, was still 13 percent.
- 10 So, according to this particular metric,
- 11 the rate of return on invested capital, the S&P 500
- companies in this sample, earned 13 percent more than
- their cost of capital in 2009 in the middle of the
- 14 global financial crisis.
- So, again, it has to do with just the
- 16 calculations and the limitations of the data, you
- 17 know, and the message here is don't interpret -- over
- interpret the data. You need to put everything in
- 19 perspective. I'm running out of time. I will go
- 20 quickly. I'm just going to not show that slide and
- just say what I said. I'm going to make three
- 22 adjustments through the STB's definition.

	Page 41
1	Adjustment number one is the deferred tax
2	and the denominator. I'm not going to deduct it. I
3	don't think you should deduct it, I won't deduct it.
4	Adjustment number two is I'm going to
5	include non-goodwill intangible assets. Why include
6	non-goodwill intangible assets? Those are things
7	like brand value, customer list. They generate
8	revenue if you're having income in the numerator, the
9	denominator should reflect all the assets generating
10	that income, so I include non-goodwill intangible
11	assets.
12	This has little effect on the very
13	little effect on the railroads, because the railroads
14	just don't have those assets on their books. But it
15	does affect other companies. And then in the
16	numerator, the value of an asset is based on the
17	magnitude, timing and risk of cash flows. The
18	deferred tax component of income tax expense isn't
19	the cash flow.
20	And it's an expense that the company on a
21	going-concern basis will never pay. So, I am going
22	to exclude deferred income taxes in the numerator, as

- well as the denominator. They're out. So, those are
- the three adjustments I made. And I'm going to show
- you these three slides again. And the three slides
- 4 are now going to be the slide that you saw before and
- 5 next to it will be this different definition and
- 6 you'll see what happens.
- And before I show you that, I just want to
- 8 show you the impact on the railroads. The black line
- 9 here is the cost of capital. STB's cost of capital
- 10 for the railroad. The blue line is the STB's measure
- of ROIC. And we can see that early on the blue line
- is below the black line and then it goes above, and
- it's been a little above over this time period.
- If we look at my calculation of ROIC, it's
- 15 the -- I'm going to call it orange line, or whatever
- that color is. And there you see that all but in
- only one year, the company -- the railroad industry
- 18 earned more than its cost of capital based on this
- 19 calculation.
- Now, you might say well then, you're just
- being biased and favor the railroads. No. I'm doing
- 22 this to everybody. Would I interpret this as saying

- the railroads in one year earn more than their cost
- of capital? No. That would over interpret the data.
- 3 You can't get that information out of accounting
- 4 data. It doesn't tell you that information.
- 5 So, let's look at these charts. On the
- 6 left-hand side is what you saw before, so we had a 19
- 7 percent increase or a rate of return on invested
- 8 capital above their cost of capital for the S&P 500.
- 9 And then we had essentially, a point about a half a
- 10 percent for the railroads. The railroads went down
- about 2 percent in that previous chart.
- The S&P 500 goes down about 10 percent.
- 13 So, you see on the right-hand side, you see that gap
- closes and that gap goes from 19 percent down to 9
- 15 percent. Just by changing, looking at what I think
- is a couple of reasonable, what I think --
- 17 adjustments.
- 18 Again, that doesn't tell you anything
- 19 about true economics, but it does put into
- 20 perspective the railroads are still, even on this
- 21 alternative definition, not performing like
- 22 non-railroads. And you'll see that again in the next

- 1 chart. Again, the industrials decreased about 10
- 2 percent in this different definition and the
- railroads decreased, again, the same 2 percent.
- 4 And for the customers, you'll see that
- 5 they decreased about 4 and one-half percent and a 2
- 6 percent decrease. So, the gap's always closing on
- 7 this alternative definition, so it really doesn't
- 8 favor the railroads, but it does demonstrate how
- 9 alternative definitions of accounting rates of return
- 10 can influence your results, and it's always important
- 11 to put them in perspective.
- Now, we have to ask very nicely, for more
- 13 time. I think we probably need 4 minutes, so I'm
- 14 going to ask for 8. But I want to go to Kevin and
- our Chairman, it's of course, up to you to let us get
- whatever we can from you, Kevin.
- MR. MURPHY: I always know it pays to work
- with an accountant as much as my economics class has
- 19 talked bad about accountants, you really can see
- their value. They really help you see the world
- through actually how it looks. And like I said,
- 22 putting things in perspective is very important.

Page 45 And really, again, I'll go back to what we 2 said before and just say. When you look at these 3 charts, and I think the corrected charts are probably better. I think they're better measures, but 5 they're still highly imperfect measures. But they're 6 comparable measures between the railroads' measures 7 and the other comparison groups. And you come away with a couple of things. 9 One is that the railroad performance, even today, 10 tends to be at the lower end of the spectrum, whether 11 compared to the S&P 500 as a whole, a subset of S&P 12 500 industries, or customers, and therefore, making a 13 lot of the fact that somehow we've crossed over that 14 zero line or maybe in one year in this measure, more 15 years in the other. 16 It doesn't really tell you very much. 17 second is -- and if you go back to the earlier 18 charts, go back. Like this, you can really see if 19 you look at the chart on the left or on the right 20 that the railroads' performance measured in context 21 hasn't changed very much. The gap between those two

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lines is very much the same as it was in the past.

- 1 And I think it would be a mistake, based on that, to
- 2 say well, these measures are telling me that somehow
- 3 the world is dramatically different than it was
- 4 earlier on.
- 5 These measures, as Mark said, just don't
- 6 have the ability to make those kinds of refined
- 7 calculations. So, based on what we see here, I think
- 8 it's very informative, the limitations and how one
- 9 should actually think about these measures. The
- 10 railroads tend to be toward the low end if you're
- 11 going to do something, unlikely to be a bright line
- 12 and if there were a line or a level that you'd want
- 13 to think about, it wouldn't be one centered at that
- zero point. Something more based on the distribution
- we see of these measures used in practice.
- MR. WARREN: I'll just take 30 seconds to
- 17 close. Chairman Begeman, we do, as Mark mentioned,
- we want to follow-up on your request yesterday that
- 19 parties, kind of put up or shut up when it comes to
- 20 putting proposals before the Board.
- 21 CN and Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific,
- 22 didn't ask the professors to do this analysis just

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 m l}$ because we think it's interesting. It is
- interesting. But we think it's important for the
- Board to find ways to incorporate this kind of
- 4 comparative information into its thinking about
- 5 revenue adequacy. For example, one thing the Board
- 6 could consider, is defining revenue adequacy to mean
- 7 earning or turn up the cost of capital plus whatever
- 8 the median S&P 500 company earns over its cost of
- 9 capital, which would be a way to help the revenue
- 10 adequacy standards that a measured railroad returns
- against the returns from the firms with which
- 12 railroads are competing for capital.
- We're still thinking through the issues,
- but we wanted to let you know that we are working on
- developing options that the Board could consider.
- 16 Thank you.
- 17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: And let me just clarify
- 18 my very eloquent comment yesterday with respect to
- 19 rate reform proposals, not to tell us what not to do,
- but to help us figure out what to do. And now we
- will turn to Scott Group, thank you.
- MR. GROUP: Thank you Chairman Begeman,

- 1 Vice Chairman Fuchs, Board Member Oberman, as well as
- your staffs for the opportunity to present at today's
- 3 hearings on this very important issue for the
- 4 railroads.
- 5 My name is Scott Group. I'm the Senior
- 6 Transportation Analyst at Wolfe Research, one of the
- 7 leading boutique research firms on Wall Street. Our
- 8 clients are primarily mutual funds and hedge fund
- 9 analysts and portfolio managers who invest in the
- 10 public equity and debt of the railroads and other
- 11 transportation companies. And my comments today take
- 12 these critical rail stakeholders into account.
- First, slide 2 presents stock performance
- of the Class I rails relative to trucking stocks, as
- well as the S&P 500 over the past 20 years. On
- average, rail stocks have returned 14 percent
- annually since 2000, well above other freight
- 18 sectors, including the trucks which have gained 8
- 19 percent annually. This also compares with the S&P
- 500, which has produced a 4 percent annualized return
- 21 over this time.
- We believe the outside stock returns for

- 1 the rails reflect improvements in operating margins,
- returns and free cash flow over the past 15 years.
- 3 This next slide illustrates consolidated, operating
- 4 margins for the rail industry over this same period
- 5 since 2000.
- As shown, rail margins have essentially
- 7 doubled over this period from a 19 percent average
- 8 operating margin in 2000, to a 39 percent operating
- 9 margin in 2019, based on our countered expectations.
- 10 We believe the strong margin improvement reflects a
- 11 combination of inflation plus pricing, and improved
- 12 productivity trends for the industry over time.
- Next, we show valuations for the large cap
- railroad stocks and the S&P 500, on a forward price
- 15 to earnings, or PE, basis. For a long period of time
- 16 from 1990 to 2007, the rails consistently traded
- below the S&P 500's market multiple. More recently,
- over the past decade, as margins and cash flow have
- improved, the group is treated more in line with the
- 20 overall market.
- Looking ahead, we believe that rail
- valuations would contract from current levels, back

- below a market multiple, if investors perceived
- 2 potential risk of rising government regulation of the
- 3 industry.
- 4 Slide 5 tracks rail and truck pricing over
- 5 the last 40 years and depicts the rail pricing
- 6 renaissance that began in 2004. But it's important
- ⁷ to note that since deregulation in 1980, railroads
- 8 dropped sharply over the first 23 years. They've
- 9 subsequently increased since 2004 at an average
- 10 annual rate of more than 2 percent on an
- inflation-adjusted basis.
- However, they remain down more than 40
- percent since deregulation. And, as you can see
- 14 here, the spread between truck and rail pricing has
- widened over the past 40 years.
- 16 Slide 6 takes a closer look at more medium
- 17 term pricing trends for rails versus truckload and
- 18 less than truckload carriers. Over the past 5 years,
- 19 the rails have averaged 2 percent annual pricing
- increases, and 4 percent for the TL's and 5 percent
- for the LTL's. So, while the rails have generated
- 22 inflation plus pricing, it's worth noting that they

- 1 materially lagged the pricing increases of their
- 2 closest competitors, despite those competitors being
- much more fragmented and naturally competitive.
- 4 Thus, we don't see evidence of excess or
- outside pricing being exhibited in the rail industry.
- 6 This next slide compares the current volume mix for
- 7 the rails by commodity and market compared with 20
- 9 years ago. Most notably, intermodal has increased
- 9 from 34 percent of volume in 1998, to just under 50
- 10 percent of volume today.
- And on the flip side, coal has shrunk from
- 12 27 percent of industry volume 20 years ago, to just
- 13 percent of volume today. In other words, the
- railroads have naturally become much more truck
- 15 competitive over time, with less captive coal
- 16 traffic.
- Next, we compare capital spending trends
- 18 for the rails over the past 20 years, compared with
- 19 each of the other modes of freight transportation
- that we follow. Even with some reductions in
- 21 capital spending the past few years, the rails which
- 22 are the top line, are still spending much more on

- 1 CapX than all other freight industries, including
- truckload, less than truckload, and small package
- 3 carriers.
- 4 Over this 20 year period, the rails have
- 5 spent on average 18 percent of their revenue on CapX
- 6 versus all other freight transportation sectors below
- 7 10 percent, and actually closer to 5 percent. Rail
- 8 spending is also three times higher than the roughly
- 9 6 percent average of S&P 500 companies during this
- 10 period.
- And it's worth noting that rails are
- 12 completely responsible for maintaining their own
- 13 track and terminal infrastructure, which is obviously
- 14 not the case for the trucking industry.
- Next, slide 9 looks at each rail's return
- on capital relative to the rail industry's cost of
- 17 capital as published each year by the Board. Rail
- 18 returns have, on average, improved from about 5
- 19 percent in 2003, to 10 percent plus most of this
- decade. That said, if you look at the last 10 years,
- 21 average rail returns have exceeded the industry's
- 22 cost of capital in just 4 years, and have lagged the

- industry's cost of capital in 6 years.
- Notably, average rail returns the past 2
- years have lagged the industry's cost of capital,
- 4 despite the very strong freight economy in those 2
- 5 years. Perhaps, more importantly, these return
- 6 calculations are based on the rail's historical book
- ⁷ values, which we believe are materially understated
- 8 with many assets, including bridges, tunnels and
- 9 track, that are now fully depreciated on the rail's
- 10 balance sheets.
- We try and illustrate this point here. In
- this slide, we highlight the relationship between
- capital spending and reported depreciation expense
- 14 for the rails over the past 20 years. We then share
- the same relationship between CapX and DNA for the
- 16 S&P 500.
- Over the last 5 years, rail CapX has
- essentially been double reported depreciation
- expense, while most S&P 500 companies report CapX
- 20 much closer to their book depreciation expense. In
- other words, book earnings for the rails are
- overstated relative to their real earnings, and thus

Page 54 1 returns on capital as well, are overstated. 2 So, we believe it would be much more 3 appropriate to assess the health of the rail industry 4 based on the replacement cost methodology. 5 believe this would also be much more of an apples to 6 apples comparison with most S&P 500 companies where 7 capital spending is much more in line with book 8 depreciation expense. This slide shows a simplified analysis to 10 try and directionally estimate returns on capital on 11 a replacement basis. In our analysis, we have 12 grossed up reported PP&E figures on the balance 13 sheet, in line with each rails CAPEX-to-depreciation 14 ratio. We've then grossed up shareholders' equity at 15 a similar level, and then calculated the implied 16 returns on capital. 17 As shown on the bottom right of this 18 slide, adjusted returns on capital on a replacement 19 basis would effectively be cut in half relative to 20 reported returns on a book basis. This analysis is

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somewhat simplified, but directionally shows the

returns on the replacement basis would remain well

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 m l}$ below the industry's cost of capital.
- Thus, it appears to us that despite
- improved pricing and returns over the last 15 years,
- the rail industry is not yet revenue adequate on the
- 5 long-term basis, and arguably not close. Next, slide
- 6 12 shows average rail train speeds over the last
- 7 several years on the top of the slide and composite
- 8 rail service rankings, based on our proprietary
- 9 quarterly surveys of large traffic managers and
- 10 railroad shippers.
- 11 As shown on the top, rail train speeds are
- currently at multi-year highs as the rail's benefit
- 13 from a combination of weak volume trends and improved
- service and productivity levels as they implement
- 15 precision-scheduled railroading.
- 16 Additionally, rail service rankings have
- 17 rebounded over the past year and are now back in
- 18 positive territory, indicating the view from
- 19 shippers, that rail service levels are improving.
- 20 So, despite large reductions in head count at some of
- the railroads, reported service metrics, as well as
- 22 shipper perceptions of service levels, are improving.

Page 56 1 I believe the recent improvement in rail 2 service is important in the context of the rails' 3 competitive dynamic with the trucking industry. 4 Slide 13 shows that the rails remain significantly 5 more fuel efficient than the trucking industry, while slide 14 shows that shippers consistently report to 6 7 us that railroad rates are 10 to 15 percent cheaper 8 than comparable truck rates on a lane by lane basis. Rails can help relieve highway congestion, 10 as one double stack intermodal train can take up to 11 300 trucks off the nation's congested highways. 12 Meanwhile, laying one mile of rail track is about 13 one-fifth the cost of laying one mile of new highway. 14 We believe it's important to maintain a regulatory 15 framework that remains supportive of continued strong 16 capital spending levels by the railroads. 17 The rails are vital to the North American 18 transportation network and we believe will become 19 increasingly important to infrastructure in order to 20 alleviate highway congestion and promote a more 21 efficient and environmentally conscious 22 transportation grid. While the rails have seen

- 1 strong earnings and stock performance in recent
- years, this is the most capital intensive industry,
- of which you are aware.
- 4 As a result, the rails have low financial
- 5 returns on a replacement basis, and we believe rail
- 6 returns would decline if the Board were to implement
- 7 material regulatory reform that reduced the rails'
- 8 ability to differentially price. In that scenario of
- 9 reduced pricing power for railroads, we would also
- 10 expect that shareholders would demand substantial
- 11 reductions in capital spending.
- In fact, we surveyed over 170 of our
- institutional clients over the past 2 weeks to ask
- their opinion about potential rate reform. As you
- can see here, the results are quite clear. 99
- 16 percent of investors that we surveyed would be less
- 17 likely to invest in railroad stocks if the STB
- 18 enforced constraints on rail pricing.
- We believe it's important for the STB to
- 20 consider this overwhelming investor response as the
- 21 Board contemplates potential future regulatory
- 22 changes for the industry. Thank you.

Page 58 1 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Mr. Group, I'll just 2 start off with you if that's okay. Okay? In your 3 summary slide, you said we don't see evidence of 4 excessive pricing power, rail pricing material lag 5 and truckload pricing. When you refer to rail 6 pricing, you're referring to the rates for all 7 commodities? 8 MR. GROUP: Yes. We're -- that comment 9 refers to aggregate rail pricing, so as I think we 10 had the slide earlier that showed that over the last 11 5 years, rail rates have increased 2 percent while 12 trucking rates have been increasing 4 to 5 percent 13 annually. 14 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And you also had 15 this slide that showed that the commodity mix has 16 changed quite a bit. Your rail pricing measure 17 controls for commodity mix? 18 MR. GROUP: Yeah, our analysis -- what we 19 try and do is we try and eliminate the impact of fuel 20 and mix, so we're trying to get true same-source 21 pricing. 22 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Same store. So,

- 1 however, you have a basket of goods within your rail
- 2 pricing index that is constant throughout.
- MR. GROUP: So, what we do is we take each
- 4 rail when they report earnings every quarter, they
- 5 report their total yield trends revenue per carload.
- 6 And then we eliminate the impact of commodity mix and
- we eliminate the impact of fuel surcharges, higher
- 8 and lower.
- 9 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay. So, from that
- index, so Mr. Ellig has a point that when you're
- 11 assessing the longer term assessment of rail rate
- 12 trends, such an analysis should determine whether or
- 13 not rates have increased faster than the rates of
- inflation and taking a look at for captive shippers.
- 15 So, if you're looking across the rail industry, is
- there potential that your rate measure includes a
- great deal of competitive shipments, and to the
- 18 extent that the railroads are getting more
- 19 competitive shipments, it might obfuscate some
- 20 pricing power on captive shippers?
- MR. GROUP: I think that certainly that
- would be possible, but I would say that if you're

- 1 competing with trucks, and if trucks are raising
- 2 rates 4 percent annually, it's unlikely that the 2
- 3 percent increase for the rails on the competitive
- 4 traffic is much less than the 2 percent if your
- 5 competitor is raising rates 4 percent annually.
- 6 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I see. But I guess
- 7 what I'm trying to get at is it could be possible, if
- 8 we assume that the vast majority of rail traffic is
- 9 competitive. And that's a, you know, big growth
- 10 areas of the business. You could expect a situation
- where the small fraction of rail traffic that is not
- competitive could be seeing more and more pricing
- power that vastly exceeds, kind of the trends that
- 14 are documented here and that wouldn't necessarily --
- 15 the rate chart might not necessarily capture that.
- 16 Is that a fair assessment?
- MR. GROUP: I suppose that's possible.
- 18 That being said, I don't know that I have data around
- 19 this, but anecdotally if we think that coal is the
- 20 most captive business that the railroads have,
- 21 certainly coal yields have been increasing at a
- 22 slower rate than other yields and some of the

Page 61 railroads and most notably, Union Pacific, 2 continually talk about the challenging pricing 3 environment for coal. VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Sure. 5 MR. GROUP: So, also, I'm not so sure that 6 that would be the case. 7 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay, of course we 8 had a good discussion yesterday with the case of coal, you know, I think that the rails would put 10 forward that for some coal traffic, not all, you 11 know, they believe that they have, you know, product 12 competition with natural gas and not every captive 13 shipper has the same competitive forces. 14 So, can I talk a little bit about 15 replacement costs? This is -- Scott, I think you had 16 a very helpful calculation and for the professors. I 17 noticed you all said financial performance. And if 18 we were to think about economic return, what's the 19 appropriate way to think about economic return? 20 MR. MURPHY: I would say economic returns 21 you should think about two things. One, based on 22 replacement cost as you're talking about return on

- 1 new investments. New investments or the costs of new
- 2 investments for which replacement costs of existing
- 3 assets would be a proxy.
- 4 And secondly, before -- with looking --
- 5 that is the expected return on investments going
- 6 forward. And the kind of measures we've talked about
- ⁷ here are both historical cost and backward looking,
- 8 so they differ for those two reasons, among others.
- 9 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, in your view,
- 10 the best assessment for economic returns under the
- 11 statute, as they're required for revenue adequacy, is
- 12 to shift towards a replacement cost basis?
- MR. MURPHY: I would think that's probably
- 14 a better way to go. You know, best is always tough
- because, you know, you'd say in principal, if I could
- 16 really measure the cost of new investments and what
- 17 the return is that would be great. Replacement cost
- brings its own issues.
- I think it's probably an improvement net.
- 20 I said that in the earlier statement I submitted to
- the Board in a prior.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yeah, and when the

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 m l}$ Board has considered it in the past, a few issues
- that they found that you know, obviously the
- yaluation issue and what the adjustment to the cost
- of capital, which I think right now the Board -- and
- 5 please correct me here, inform me the way the Board
- 6 calculates the cost of capital is nominal. And it
- yould have to be adjusted to real if we went to
- 8 replacement costs.
- 9 MR. MURPHY: Not, there's a couple ways to
- 10 do it. You always want to do apples to apples. I
- don't think you necessarily have to go to a real
- 12 return as the threshold, you just have to include the
- 13 appreciation of assets in the returns. And going
- through a real -- exactly, you have to take account
- of the change in asset prices, either in the
- threshold that you set, or in the measures of the
- 17 actual returns.
- 18 Probably the better way to do it is
- 19 actually to leave the cost of capital the same and
- adjust the way you measure the firm's net return.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I see.
- MR. MURPHY: That's the way I would teach

Page 64 1 you in class. 2 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And for the 3 replacement cost, you know, another issue is just 4 that the fact that I think some folks bring up that 5 maybe railroads don't -- aren't going to replace 6 every asset. How should we be thinking about that in 7 your view? 8 MR. MURPHY: You know, I think you -- one 9 thing you could try to do is to look at the kinds of 10 investments that they're actually making and see what 11 their price adjustments are for those types of 12 investments. We've talked about various ways. 13 don't think there's a perfect measure which is why I 14 think moving to replacement cost, while better, still 15 is going to leave some of those issues on the table. 16 But I think you need to think about what 17 the asset mix is. I think that issue is probably 18 less today than it was in the past. You know, if you 19 tried to do this in 1980, where there was an 20 enormous amount of kind of redundant, not very useful 21 assets, it wouldn't be replicated. 22 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right, right.

Page 65 MR. MURPHY: I do think today's world that 2 that differential is getting smaller and smaller 3 because the railroads have gotten a lot closer to kind of where they would like to be going forward in 5 terms of shedding assets. 6 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I understand Mr. 7 Group's estimates were, you know, for the purposes of 8 discussion and the like, but what do you make of that 9 methodology? 10 MR. MURPHY: Which methodology? 11 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: When he was 12 estimating replacement costs as a, you know, using 13 proxies for discussion purposes I understand. 14 MR. MURPHY: Yeah, I mean we did similar 15 calculations and our calculations didn't come out so 16 different than his. So, I don't think that's a bad 17 place to start. I'm not sure that would be the 18 methodology you'd end up using if you went down this 19 road in practice. 20 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: What entity has the 21 best measure that you've seen in practice of an 22 economic rate of return, and it could be an agency,

- 1 could be on a case you worked on. You know, ideally
- it would be, you know, something that's comparable to
- 3 what we do, and you know, understanding all the
- 4 difficulties we just talked about with replacement
- 5 cost, that entity nailed it.
- 6 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, if I could answer that
- question. I was engaged by the DOJ in the Visa
- 8 litigation and in that litigation, we calculated the
- 9 economic rate of return on discovery. How could we
- 10 do that? We knew the initial investment, so we went
- 11 back to their initial investments. We knew all the
- investments they made, and we calculated the value at
- 13 the end.
- So, we had the investments in the
- beginning, we could calculate a measure of value at
- 16 the end. And we knew all the cash flows in between.
- We calculated the internal rate of return, and that
- is the economic rate of return -- that discovered
- 19 earning on its assets during that period.
- That is an example of how you calculate an
- 21 economic rate of return.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Now, talk me through

- 1 the applicability of the Board.
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: I think you threw it out
- within two and that's more difficult because you
- 4 can't go back to the railroad's initial investments.
- 5 You don't have those investments any more.
- 6 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right.
- 7 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, the best you can do is
- 8 start at some point in time and calculate the
- 9 value -- the replacement cost of all their assets and
- 10 go through a similar calculation. But in a regulated
- situation, the problem is it's difficult to calculate
- 12 the end point because the end point today, the value
- 13 today is dependent on the market's expectations of
- what you all are going to do.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right.
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, there's a circularity
- 17 there to try to use market prices today because
- 18 that's dependent on market expectations of you. So,
- 19 it's a much more difficult calculation to conduct in
- your setting.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And in your
- 22 calculations of -- when you use the cost of capital,

Page 68 1 you used CAPM, or --2 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: We did what the STB does. 3 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: For the multi-stage 4 discounted cash flow, did you use projections of each 5 industry? 6 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Yes. So, Duff and Phelps, 7 which is the same source that the STB -- your source, 8 eventually that the STB uses, we used their 9 calculation. So, we didn't calculate it 10 specifically, we used Duff and Phelps calculation. 11 So, Duff and Phelps has a beta calculation for 12 industry and a two digit SIC code, and they also have 13 the multi-stage DCF calculation for on a two digit 14 SIC code, and those are the ones we used. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And --16 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: And excuse me, I'm sorry. 17 And I should just tell you. So, we wrote up as just 18 part of our normal work, a detailed here step by step 19 everything that we calculated and I'm happy to give 20 that to you. 21 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Appreciate it. And 22 as I understand it, thinking about CAPM and

Page 69 multi-stages kind of cash flow. You know, the Board 2 uses a weighted average of 50/50. And on top of that 3 we use a three-stage, multi-stage discounted cash flow model. And you know, please, educate me, but as 5 I understand it, the number of stages in a discounted 6 kind of cash flow model, kind of differs based on the 7 characteristics of the industry in terms of what's 8 the most appropriate model. Could you maybe talk to me about what you 10 see as the appropriate weight between CAPM and all 11 these stages, cash flow, what the Board should be 12 using for its cost to capital, and if the Board is 13 supposed to be in your view, using multi-stage as 14 cash flow, what's the appropriate methodology for

- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Those are --
- 17 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Two questions. The
- 18 first is --

doing so.

- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: I got, I got it.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: A 50/50 way. And
- second is what do you think of the three stages?
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, I'm going to go

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- backwards, because, so the multi-stage is a common
- 2 method that's being used. The benefit of using that
- is you're using forecast to the future, so it's
- 4 forward looking.
- 5 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yeah.
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: More so, than the CAPM
- 7 which you use, you know, a very, very long time
- 8 period to calculate the market risk premium. The
- 9 only part of that calculation that's forward looking
- is the yield on government debt. So, that's the
- 11 difference. Which one is better?
- 12 They've never been tested empirically in a
- horse race to say one is better than the other.
- 14 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: But you think the
- 15 50/50 weight is about right, or is common in terms of
- estimated cost of capital.
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Since we don't know which
- one is better, it's a flip of the coin which one is
- 19 better. 50/50 is the best you can do.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Sure. And now for
- the stages?
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Alright and stages. So, I

- disagree with you. Every -- I could take any company
- in the world and I could do a three-stage, a two-
- 3 stage, a 20-stage, you can do as many stages as you
- 4 like as long as in each stage you have the
- 5 appropriate growth rates.
- So, a three-stage model is fine as long as
- 7 the growth rate is appropriate for each one of those
- 8 stages. So, the number of stages doesn't matter.
- 9 The growth rates used in each of the stages drives
- whether or not it's appropriate or not, or it's
- useful or not.
- 12 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Very helpful. Okay,
- and I don't want to monopolize, okay. URCS -- Mr.
- 14 Ellig, you've had -- you know, I've obviously read
- 15 the TRB report, and your remarks, and you noted that
- 16 URCS is a variable cost measure, includes, you know,
- 17 fixed costs and that is your -- one of your primary
- 18 criticisms would you say it's your primary
- 19 criticisms, would you say it's your primary criticism
- of URCS as a measure of variable cost.
- I know that there are issues that we had
- in terms of efficiency adjustments and insurance and

- 1 the like that we've talked about in other forums, but
- is that your primary criticism?
- MR. ELLIG: Yeah, I mean the economic
- 4 theory problem with it is that it's treating a lot of
- 5 things as variable or incremental that aren't
- 6 variable or incremental.
- 7 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And so, the
- 8 prototypical example is like URCS has a 50 percent
- 9 wait for rail property investment. And I guess, a
- 10 two-part question. First is does that mean that the
- 11 variable cost is over stated?
- MR. ELLIG: It could be over stated, could
- be under stated, depending on the circumstances,
- 14 because the other classic example is hazardous
- 15 materials holds that may have actually higher
- 16 incremental or variable costs that are unaccounted
- 17 for, because of risk and so forth.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Because insurance.
- MR. ELLIG: Yeah. So, it could go either
- 20 way.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, is it -- you
- 22 know, and obviously the use of URCS is important for

- a number of things. You know, most prominently the
- 2 market dominance threshold. So, in your view,
- because of that dynamic, the way that the Board
- 4 currently calculates URCS by adding that, again, it's
- 5 possible that there are some shippers that you
- 6 believe unfairly can't bring a market dominance
- 7 case -- make a market dominance showing, because of
- 8 the allocation of fixed cost.
- 9 MR. ELLIG: Yeah, and also the converse
- 10 there are probably some that are eligible because
- they're above 180, but it's not really, yeah.
- 12 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay. And then in
- terms of your criticisms of SAC that came up
- 14 yesterday. And on the first panel, and somebody said
- that TRB got it wrong on SAC. And let's set aside
- the issues which, I think part of your issue with SAC
- is that it uses URCS in some ways in terms of maximum
- 18 markup methodology as well as ATC for the allocation
- of costs.
- 20 But what I think the point you were making
- in the report was, and this was what I asked the
- 22 people yesterday, is you know, you talked about how

- within SAC, the hypothetical, you know, the railroad
- is not profit constrained and every rate is not
- ³ regulated.
- 4 As such the cross subsidy kind of
- 5 envisioned by Falhaber and Baumol, doesn't really
- 6 hold. And you know, I think that the explanation
- 7 that I got, just to fill you in, was that's not -- it
- 8 doesn't hold in part because even under those
- 9 circumstances, a shipper shouldn't be paying over
- their stand-alone costs and that shipper still should
- be entitled to relief, and I might be paraphrasing
- wrong.
- I just -- I guess I'm wondering, can you
- elaborate on why you -- why the TRB report thought
- 15 that the use of SAC conceptually was highly
- questionable and why even when someone is over their
- stand-alone cost, they wouldn't be entitled to
- 18 relief?
- MR. ELLIG: Oh, sure, and by the way, I've
- 20 published things in the past that were very favorable
- about the stand-alone cost methodology, and actually
- 22 kind of changed my mind as we dug into it in that

Page 75 1 study. 2 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yeah. 3 MR. ELLIG: Because again, as a matter of economic theory, you can have efficient prices that 5 do involve some cross subsidies, and so the decision 6 to use stand-alone cost as a ceiling, is really a decision that's more based on a notion of equity that 8 it's not right to make any shipper pay more than the stand-alone cost. It's just not fair. 10 And if you want to use that as a 11 definition of what's, you know, what's fair for the 12 purposes of setting rates, that's fine, but that 13 doesn't necessarily mean that rates are being set in 14 the economically efficient manner. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, talk me through 16 a situation where a shipper is getting priced below 17 incremental costs. I think, you know, it's 18 typically, in Falhaber/Baumol, and that's an 19 inefficient outcome. 20 MR. ELLIG: Oh, gosh. I think that

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from some of Baumol's work and others, but I mean

involves reproducing a bunch of theoretic equations

- 1 they've at least demonstrated mathematically as a
- 2 matter of theory it is possible for -- under certain
- 3 cost of demand conditions, to have a set of efficient
- 4 prices that involves some cross subsidies.
- 5 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay, I have more,
- 6 but please.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Good morning.
- 8 Matt, I'd like to start with you if I could. When
- 9 you put up your slides showing us excerpts of our
- 10 statutes, you omitted subsection 6 of the RTP and do
- 11 you think it's irrelevant?
- MR. WARREN: No, I'm very glad you asked
- 13 that question because speaking of omitting things,
- 14 let's talk about what the RTP says and holds. So, I
- 15 think I'd like to start because there was a lot of
- talk yesterday about 10101(6) and you know, we
- submitted our slides, you know, a couple days ago, so
- 18 I haven't had a chance to stick one in here.
- But I think that there has been in some of
- the commentary, some misunderstanding about what the
- 21 RTP actually says. So, I think if we look at 101 --
- 22 10101(6) in isolation, what does it say? It says

- $^{
 m l}$ that the Board is to maintain reasonable rates where
- there is an absence of effective competition, and
- 3 where rail rates provide revenues that exceed the
- 4 amount necessary to maintain the rail system and the
- 5 track as capital.
- So, but if you look at the RTP, we've got
- 7 15 factors. That's the only one that talks about
- 8 rate reasonableness. So, this is not some
- 9 individual, this is not some secret mouse hole that
- 10 Congress has put in the statute saying that the Board
- 11 needs to be using a revenue adequacy constraint.
- 12 It's saying, one of the policies of the
- United States, is that first the ICC and now the
- 14 Board, has an important role to maintain reasonable
- 15 rates. But wait. As you're maintaining those
- 16 reasonable rates, you need to pay attention to two
- 17 things that Congress made crystal clear in Staggers.
- First, our direction that you need to
- maintain reasonable rates, doesn't apply in the
- 20 presence of effective competition. So, don't
- regulate under 180 and even if it's above 180, you
- 22 need to first find that there is no effective

Page 78 1 competition before it can regulate it. 2 And number two, don't forget what we said 3 in 10704(a)(2), that you also have a duty to ensure 4 that all railroads become revenue adequate. And I 5 would direct you in part to, you know, a couple lines 6 above in the RTP, 10101(3), which directs the 7 Board -- reminds the Board that it is to promote a 8 safe and efficient rail transportation system by 9 allowing rail carriers to earn adequate revenues. 10 So, I think if you look at the RTP, I 11 think in particular, 10101(6) is only talking about 12 in general the Board has the duty to -- you have the 13 responsibility to provide a forum for shippers to 14 come and, you know, bring allegations upon reasonable 15 rates, but it needs to remember market dominance and 16 it needs to remember that it is to assist railroads 17 in becoming revenue adequate. 18 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Nobody would 19 quarrel that market dominance is a threshold. 20 you know, 6 -- we can't just leave out 6 either. 21 don't find this elephant in a mouse hole analogy to

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be very instructive because at least 15 mouse holes,

Page 79 and I don't know if there are any elephants around. 2 But you didn't mention -- subsection 12, 3 you admitted, talks about when you said 6 is the only 4 one about reasonable prices. I don't agree. 5 talks about prohibiting predatory pricing. 6 there's a lot of messages in that RTP and I just --7 I'm struggling with how we implement how we do our 8 rate reasonableness trying to keep an account of all 9 15. 10 I don't think any of them are mouseholes, 11 I think that Congress laid them out and I think the 12 courts have said they're all equal. You can't just 13 single one out, but you can't omit it either, and I 14 just -- I couldn't figure out where you thought that 15 fit in to the sections you did cite to us. 16 But let me ask a related question because 17 I think the language in 10704(a)(2) is certainly 18 important -- equally important. You can't ignore 19 that either. It talks about plus a reasonable and 20 economic profit or return. So, we've been talking 21 about economic profit here and I have a couple

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questions about it. How do you interpret the fact

- 1 that the Congress didn't say plus an economic profit,
- which would have been easy for Congress to say, if
- 3 all it meant was, we should listen to our prominent
- 4 economists here.
- 5 It also said a reasonable and economic
- 6 profit. What do you think that means, if anything, a
- 7 reasonable surplusage there, how are we supposed to
- 8 interpret it?
- 9 MR. WARREN: I think that -- I mean I
- think that's, you know, I think reasonable there. In
- part, I think it's important to remember that this is
- 12 you know, the definition of where the revenue
- 13 adequacy should be drawn. So, obviously, an economic
- 14 profit of, you know, 1,000 percent would still count
- 15 as an economic profit -- a very economic profit.
- But, you know, it would be appropriate for
- 17 the Board to say, yeah, at some point, that's not
- 18 reasonable. That's, you know, for purposes of
- 19 defining what revenue adequacy is, whether a carrier
- is appropriately revenue adequate. So, I think that
- reasonable there is you know, is the kind of signal
- 22 that would give the Board license to look at, for

- 1 example, what are other firms in the marketplace
- 2 earning?
- What are their economic profits and how
- 4 could we say that, you know, where does this fit in
- 5 line with that.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I just want to jump
- ⁷ in on that Matt, just to make sure because I'm trying
- 8 to figure out the inner play between how you all view
- 9 we should measure revenue adequacy and how we do the
- 10 SAC test, and we had some discussion yesterday on it
- in the first panel.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: No, no, go ahead.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: But what we, kind
- of, I thought arrived at was if SAC is setting for
- 15 the hypothetical railroad, a rate of return that
- 16 can't exceed cost of capital, so it's at zero
- 17 percent, and anybody who can make a showing is a
- 18 captive shipper, can come in and make sure that on a
- 19 replacement cost basis, the railroad can't make ROI
- over cost of capital, for their rate.
- Then necessarily, when a railroad has an
- 22 ROI over cost of capital, that's -- that economic

- 1 profit is through competitive traffic and through
- innovation and other good things. That's what I
- thought we arrived at. So, if you're telling me that
- 4 the economic profit of 1,000 percent is no good, why
- 5 wouldn't an economic profit of 1,000 percent on
- 6 competitive traffic and innovation and all these
- 7 productivity things still not be good?
- MR. WARREN: Yes. So, I mean I think one
- 9 of the messages here is you know, the Board should
- 10 not be regulating rates based on system-wide returns.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right.
- MR. WARREN: The Board should be
- 13 regulating rates and it should be pursuing RTP 6 and
- 14 RTP 13, based on looking at individual circumstances.
- 15 And even if you have it -- so.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Oh, no, I'm with
- 17 you. I just -- because I thought what we arrived at
- 18 yesterday was that, you know, the economic profit is
- 19 a good thing, if we're properly constraining monopoly
- 20 profits. So, when you just mentioned that a railroad
- shouldn't have that much economic profit, I just kind
- 22 of --

Page 83 MR. WARREN: I'm not saying that a 2 railroad shouldn't have that much economic profit. 3 I'm saying that for purposes of the Board of what this is doing, is saying defining the line of revenue 5 adequacy, that you know, at some point the Board 6 could say, you know, this is where we believe it is a 7 reasonable economic profit. So, at this point, we were going to 9 declare mission accomplished. This railroad is 10 revenue adequate. 11 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I hear you, I just 12 thought -- and Marty I'll give it right back, but I 13 just thought that what we arrived at was if we 14 properly constrained monopoly profits, whatever 15 economic profit there is is reasonable. 16 MR. WARREN: Yes. 17 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay, so are you 18 telling me to constrain reasonable economic --19 MR. WARREN: No, I agree with that. 20 just --21 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Economic profit, 22 when all economic profit is reasonable, do you know

Page 84 1 what I mean. 2 MR. WARREN: Yes. No, but I'm not saying, 3 you know, I think that, you know, we're in some ways 4 talking about two different things because this is 5 you know, the Board has a duty to assist railroads in 6 becoming revenue adequate. This is the definition of 7 revenue adequate. 8 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right. MR. WARREN: I think understanding where 10 there are pockets of market power and what individual 11 rates are reasonable, I think that's a different 12 inquiry. 13 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yes. 14 MR. WARREN: So, I think the Board saying 15 here's a level where we think you are revenue 16 adequate. I don't think has anything to do with you 17 know, what the process is individually. 18 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: No, that's okay. 19 That's helpful. I'm happy to.

22 But --

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here and this is out of my area, so I apologize.

MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, just on my reading

Page 85 1 It's okay, I'm out BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: 2 of my area, go ahead. 3 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: The statute says a 4 reasonable and economic profit or return, or both. BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Or both? 5 6 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Or both. And so, it's or 7 both, so when I read that and I was going through the 8 cites, it says that you could do both of those. You could have a reasonable return, plus an above the 10 reasonable return, an economic profit. That's the --11 how I interpreted the "or both." 12 Now, I'm not a lawyer. This is you know, 13 a legal statute, but that's how I interpreted the "or 14 both" which I have a feeling they were talking about. 15 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, let me say 16 First of all, I have -- I want to pay great 17 deference to both you and Professor Murphy, if for no 18 other reason, because you're from Chicago, which 19 qualifies you for something. 20 But and this really -- I was going to 21 direct it to Matt, but I really think you are moving 22 into how I -- where my questioning is. To me the

- word "or" that the Congress put in there, just as an
- open door. It doesn't tell us which, it says we can
- 3 do and/or, so it's a little broader language. It
- 4 isn't as prescriptive as it might have been.
- 5 But it's also these things that are
- 6 undefined, and that was where I was heading Matt, and
- 7 I'm going to say Professor Z, I'm going to take you
- 9 up on that. Professor Murphy, I'd like them to
- 9 weigh in on this, is the formula that has been
- 10 presented here about the rate of return and so forth,
- one map that you would argue should be read into this
- section of the statute about defining economic
- 13 profit?
- Because if we're going to have a revenue
- 15 adequacy determination, whether we do it for one year
- or long-term, we have to have a measuring stick. We
- 17 can't just look at it and say it looks good, we have
- 18 to have some way of measuring this.
- We have a way now of measuring it. It
- seems to me you're here saying we really should
- re-evaluate how we do it. So, is there some precise
- definition of economic profit that you think should

- be read into the statute?
- Or, does the use of the word "reasonable"
- here, tell us that we can be instructed by the
- 4 presentation, but ultimately, we still have to pick a
- 5 number? I'm so lost at legally what's restricting
- 6 us here.
- 7 MR. WARREN: Well, I mean, I think in fact
- 8 the word reasonable is a legal restriction in the
- 9 statute. But yeah, I mean, I think the message here
- 10 is you know, for many years, you know, the Board has
- heard from you know, the industry in area 722 and
- 12 prior panels, you know, you have natural -- you need
- 13 to be using the replacement cost, you know, you're --
- the accounting returns aren't reliable, and you know,
- and thinking about, you know, the rate reform task
- force, and how to appropriately respond to that.
- One of the things we thought about is
- there, you know, should we go in and talk about
- 19 replacement cost again, or should we really try to do
- something? Let's try to show the Board why
- accounting rates of return aren't a reasonable
- measure.

Page 88 1 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: That's fine, but 2 what I'm trying to figure out is, what is the 3 measure, as an economic return -- for two reasons: 4 Number one -- you know, you're all suggesting to us 5 that we should use replacement cost. A -- do you 6 think that the statute using that phrase and economic 7 profit mandates it, and two -- using Professor Z's 8 point, if we're going to use replacement cost, it's 9 not as easy to figure out as it was in that discovery 10 accounting case, because as you pointed out, who 11 knows where we start measuring replacement cost, so 12 what's the guidance that we would have to construe 13 our statute? That's really what I'm look for here. 14 Or, at least what your contention is. I'm sure 15 others will have other contentions, but I'm not sure 16 how to absorb all of this intelligence that you've 17 put forward here. 18 MR. MURPHY: I guess I would say there are 19 two paths that you could try to take. One would be 20 to alter the measure, that would be to say move 21 toward replacement costs and say that's getting 22 closer. It doesn't measure directly, perfectly,

- 1 economic returns, but it's hopefully getting us
- 2 closer to what we're looking for.
- The other path is to say there are
- 4 problems there, maybe for reasons, other reasons, I
- 5 don't want to go there. I want to use a measure that
- 6 I'm using now. If you're going to use that measure,
- you want to say, "How do I interpret it?" And that's
- 8 hopefully, what we tried to do for you today, is to
- ⁹ give you an idea of the characteristics that measure
- 10 has.
- Where you should think about what it's
- 12 telling you. What's high, what's low, how big a
- 13 change that I would expect to see occurring
- 14 naturally. So, I think actually, we were trying to
- be very constructive in saying, how does your measure
- 16 utilize -- how can you actually use it -- not say,
- oh, it's a bad measure, don't use it. It's saying if
- 18 you're going to use it, recognize it's an imperfect
- 19 measure, but you can have a judge -- you have some
- data that helps you assess its imperfections, whether
- it tends to be too high or too low and how big
- variations seem significant.

Page 90 1 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: I would invite all 2 three of you to present to us a legal argument of how 3 to use the -- if I could phrase it that was, the 4 economic data. You know, the Congress gave us some 5 breadth here, and I would say that Congress is not 6 necessarily any more expert economist than I am. 7 so, that's clear to me, what they were given the 8 complexity of these calculations, exactly what our 9 mandate is. 10 I think it's fuzzy at best. It may not 11 be. Maybe these terms have more precise meaning from 12 a statutory point of view. And what I'm looking for 13 is to interrelate the legal standards with the 14 economic -- with sound economic concepts here. And 15 so, as yet, I don't have much specific guidance as 16 this is helpful. 17 There may not be a precise answer until 18 some court gives us more depth. We obviously have --19 are delegated the authority to interpret these 20 statutes to some degree, and we have to do that. 21 And I'm looking for guidance on that part, and that's 22 why I asked you Matt, what -- I gather it's not just

Page 91 simply saying everything that Professor Z and 2 Professor Murphy told us here this morning, just gets 3 incorporated into this section of the statute on 4 economic return. It's not that simple. 5 MR. WARREN: No, and I'll hand it to Mark 6 in a second. I mean I think that the statutory 7 language, I think economic profit or return on 8 capital employed in the business does suggest that the Board ought to be looking at something more like 10 replacement cost and accounting returns. And I think 11 what this analysis essentially is an alternative way 12 of getting at that goal because the Board has --13 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: I understand, but 14 and not to put you on the spot because it's a 15 complicated subject, but looking at something like, to use your most recent phrase there, doesn't tell me 16 17 how to decide the issue. I need something -- I'd 18 like to at least hear what your contention is and I'd 19 like to have it based on a legal argument as well as 20 an economic argument. 21 MR. WARREN: Well let me get, if you'll 22 permit me, let me give the legal argument and then

- 1 let Mark give the economic argument. From a legal
- argument, you know, I would think the staff here
- 3 requires an economic profit on capital and more than
- 4 that, you know, Congress repeatedly says that it's
- 5 important to, you know, for -- railroads need to be
- 6 able to attract and retain capital.
- 7 They need to, you know, raise needed
- 8 equity capital. I mean you really have this kind
- 9 of -- you know belt and suspenders approach in the
- 10 statute where you can get a sense of how the
- 11 Staggers Congress was very disappointed that they did
- 12 not believe that the ICC had appropriately
- implemented revenue adequacy.
- And has reminded them again and again, and
- then again at the legislative history of how
- important Congress believed it was for railroads to
- be able to compete on equal footing with other
- businesses. So, we think that is the legal hook.
- 19 And I think, as I mentioned at the close, where we're
- 20 actively thinking about and developing ways that the
- 21 Board could potentially incorporate findings like
- 22 this in its revenue adequacy determinations.

Page 93 1 But I think that's the core of our 2 arguments. 3 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: I want to defer to 4 Ann here for a minute, but I'd like to have that a 5 little more concretely as from a -- as a lawyer, so I 6 can sink my teeth into it. 7 MR. WARREN: I understand. BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Because I can't 9 evaluate it based just on these general 10 presentations. If you're asking me to approve a 11 standard through revenue adequacy, I've got some 12 general concepts here, but you know, I've written a 13 lot of laws in my time, and to sit down now and write a standard based on what I'm hearing today, I'd have 15 a hard time doing it, even if I wanted to agree 100 16 percent with what you're saying. I'm not sure I do. But I'd like to at least know what -- how you intend 17 18 that revenue adequacy standard should be written. 19 MR. WARREN: Yeah, so I appreciate that, 20 and I believe Chairman Begeman indicated yesterday, 21 that the record would be held open. So, we would be 22 happy to provide some more information there.

Page 94 1 MR. MURPHY: I will say one thing. 2 can't comment on the legal side. I'm not a lawyer. 3 I can tell you on the economics side. 4 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: That shouldn't keep 5 you from commenting. 6 MR. MURPHY: What we mean by economic 7 profit or economic notions and things are always 8 about opportunities, opportunity cost. And that's 9 why comparing them to other firms and assessing 10 profitability or economic profit relative to what 11 other firms get, is the natural economic approach 12 because that is the opportunity cost of capital that 13 people face. 14 And so, if you're going to talk about 15 economic profit, I teach this in my class every year. 16 Economic profit is always what you get compared to 17 the alternative. It's not some abstract notion that 18 God told me this should have been the number. No. 19 It's what do you get compared to the market 20 alternatives. And that's why a comparison to other 21 firms makes so much sense if you're interested in 22 economic profit.

- Because economics is always about a
- 2 specific compared to the alternatives.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Let me ask on that
- 4 vein, I had a lot of questions yesterday about the --
- 5 what's happening in the railroad world, in terms of
- buy back stock, and whether there's enough money for
- 7 capital expenditures and so forth.
- 8 So, I understand the abstract concept of
- 9 being able to compete for capital. But if you just
- 10 look at the last 5 years, where are the railroads
- 11 competing for capital? Because I read their balance
- sheets, their income statements. They have all the
- 13 funds they need to invest in capital based on
- operations. They're not going out and selling new
- 15 stock.
- They are borrowing money to pay for stock
- buybacks, so.
- MR. MURPHY: But you're always competing
- 19 to retain capital. That is, you're competing against
- 20 the investors who would rather put that money to use
- 21 elsewhere. Whether I have the money or not, I'm
- 22 always competing against the alternatives, whether

Page 96 1 it's to get people to bring funds in, or to retain 2 the funds I have. 3 If you have investment opportunities that 4 are not equal to what people can get on the outside, 5 firms are going to have the economic incentive and 6 their investors are going to demand that that money 7 flow elsewhere, where it has a higher rate of return. 8 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: You're saying the 9 investors are going to demand that the railroad buy 10 back the stock, is that what you're saying? 11 MR. MURPHY: I'm saying whether it's 12 the -- where the investors would demand that or 13 dividends, or other ways. Investors are always 14 looking to put funds to use where they get the 15 greatest return, and that's true whether you're 16 competing to retain the capital you have, or 17 competing to bring in new capital, that doesn't 18 change. 19 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, except that 20 this is a regulated industry, and we have something 21 to say about railroads maintaining their capital 22 structure to provide good railroads, the

- infrastructure, to provide good railroad service.
- 2 So, as a regulated industry, are railroads as free as
- 3 all these other S&P 500 companies are to have
- 4 shareholders demand that the capital come out of the
- 5 company?
- It could be if you're in the hula-hoop
- business that the investors say you're not making
- 8 enough money, pay me my money back, and shut down the
- 9 company. Do you think investors are free to do that
- in the railroad business, which is a regulated
- 11 industry?
- MR. MURPHY: I'm not aware, I'm not a
- lawyer, but my understanding is the success of the
- railroad industry that we've seen over the last,
- 15 almost 40 years now, since the Staggers Act, was
- driven by a movement away from the view that the
- railroads were a "regulated industry," to the point
- where they were an industry where competition, to the
- 19 extent it was possible, was going to be the
- determinate of both capital investment, as well as
- rates and the operation of the industry.
- 22 All the measures I've seen suggest that

- the railroad industry, the vast majority of its
- business, is in those parts of the business where
- 3 competition has been allowed to work. And I think it
- 4 would be a great mistake, as an economist, to say
- 5 we're going to move back toward a view of the
- 6 industry broadly being regulated in terms of its
- 7 competition for funds and its operation.
- 8 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, when I say
- 9 regulated, I don't mean setting prices as in the old
- 10 days. I mean aside from setting prices, maintaining
- service requirements. Maintaining infrastructure,
- safety regulations that the FRA has, we hear
- 13 repeatedly about how great the railroads are
- safety-wise because they're investing.
- 15 Those regulations the Staggers Act didn't
- 16 take away. And in fact, recently the Congress gave
- us more regulatory authority on service
- investigations. So, it's not -- it's still a
- 19 regulated industry in that sense. It's not one in
- which anybody says we should be setting rates for
- every commodity as in the old days. Nobody is
- 22 talking about that kind of regulation.

Page 99 But it just seems to me that railroads are 2 not entirely free compared to many of these S&P 3 companies that were up there to say we're going to 4 spend or not spend money on CAPEX. They have to keep 5 the system flowing, and in fact, if you look at all 6 the statutes, Matt, most of it is about keeping this 7 system in good shape. CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: So, to chime in. To 9 add to what Marty is saying and his comments. 10 want to ask you, Scott. The last chart you had of 11 your survey of your 171 investors, I think it was, if 12 I wrote it down, I mean I have it here, but it was 13 that 41 percent would be somewhat less likely? Well, it's not so much what the percentage breakdown was, 15 but I think your question to them was do they view --16 well, my question is, so, did they currently believe 17 there is no constraint on railroad pricing? 18 Is that what their current sense is? 19 Because you said if there were a 20 constraint, and then in parenthesis I think you said, 21 "like a cap." But --22 MR. GROUP: So, I didn't clarify that in

Page 100 1 the question. So, I'm not really sure how to answer 2 that. 3 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: You don't know what 4 they thought or think? 5 MR. GROUP: I think that the question -- I 6 think the implied question was the current regulatory 7 backdrop and then if that were to change. 8 Well, could I just BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: 9 chime in here on this point. You know, I know 10 something, I don't know much about anything. 11 know a little bit about political polling, and for 12 that data to be useful, that's not what the question 13 was that was asked. And we've already found out in 14 this hearing that there seems to be a wide variation 15 among the railroad lawyers who've been here, as to 16 what this task force proposal means in terms of how 17 these restraints would be in place if we adopted 18 them. 19 So, in order to have a meaningful reaction 20 as to whether 171 people in that survey are going to 21 pull their money out of the railroad industry based

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on your poll, it's essential that we know what the

- 1 question was to ask them. And are you telling us you
- don't know what the question was asked?
- MR. GROUP: No, the question, and I'll
- just repeat it: If the STB enforced constraints on
- 5 pricing, such as pricing caps, for rails that are
- 6 deemed long-term revenue adequate, would you be more
- or less likely to invest in railroad stocks? And I
- 8 think the essence of that question was taken from
- 9 effectively one of the proposals in the task force
- 10 report.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: That sounds like
- 12 the person listening to that question would
- understand that we were going to cap every commodity
- 14 on a railroad -- a revenue adequate railroad. And
- 15 that's a very broad insult to the current system
- 16 compared to what this task force, so to me, with all
- due respect, I don't have that information.
- MR. GROUP: In our research that we've
- 19 written about, we've been clear that this would not
- 20 be broadly applied. And so, I do believe --
- 21 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Scott, was it curious
- 22 to you that 41 percent would only be somewhat less

Page 102 1 likely? I found that kind of interesting that it 2 wouldn't be 100 percent. 3 MR. GROUP: 100 percent, much less likely 4 you mean. 5 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Yeah. I mean just --6 there are 41 percent would be somewhat less likely. 7 That's kind of indifferent. 8 MR. GROUP: Well, I think the no impact 9 would be the indifferent, and that was only 1 percent 10 of people. And we also give the option of more 11 likely to event and zero percent chose that response. 12 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Um-hmm. 13 MR. GROUP: And perhaps it speaks to the 14 prior point that I think investors understand that 15 this would not be 100 percent broad pricing caps, so 16 that's why it potentially is not much less likely. 17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: And plus, look. 18 very familiar with your writings over the years. Ι 19 try not to miss them. I typically -- well, on 20 occasion, I disagree with you, but actually I'm 21 curious to know. Do you pay attention to the Board's 22 annual revenue adequacy determination?

	Page 103
1	MR. GROUP: Yes, we look at it every
2	CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Why? What does it mean
3	to you since given, sort of the dialogue and what's
4	being said. It should have no meaning, so why do you
5	look at it?
6	MR. GROUP: I think that it potentially
7	I think that the long-term revenue adequacy is the
8	single biggest concern that investors in railroad
9	stocks have.
10	CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Concern as in it's a
11	goal, we want you to be revenue adequate, or oh my
12	God, I don't want to invest in a revenue adequate.
13	MR. GROUP: The potential risk that the
14	STB were to change the current regulatory backdrop
15	based on railroads being a view of railroads being
16	deemed long-term revenue adequate is the single
17	biggest concern that I think investors have.
18	And so, naturally, we look at the annual
19	determination because it arguably, influence could
20	influence, how the Board is going to proceed on
21	long-term revenue adequacy.
22	CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: And because that is

Page 104 1 you -- the investors, I guess, biggest concern. 2 that why you're here? 3 MR. GROUP: Yes. 4 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: I mean, you know, we've 5 put out a number of other proposals from the task 6 force. You've brought some interesting commentary, 7 and I'm like oh, good, it's one more benign proposal 8 after another, which I have no problem with your 9 interpretation. I'm surprised that the carriers that 10 you deal with don't have the very same 11 interpretation. 12 Instead, they think that we're doing 13 something unconstitutional and the sky will fall, 14 perhaps it has fallen as we're in here, I'm not sure. 15 Hopefully, not. But so, one of the things I do --16 and I guess I'm going to move over to Matt for a 17 second. I don't want to put words in your mouth but 18 at the beginning of the presentation, and you know, 19 I'm going to call you, you know, Mr. Z, I think you 20 sort of previewed that the industries that are 21 earning like 19.23 percent above the median, that's

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all fine too, nothing to worry about there.

Page 105 That's good. I think that's what you 2 said. That wouldn't be a reason to regulate. But 3 yet then you got into the words, the 4 unreasonableness or reasonableness language that's in 5 the statute, and then you said just generally that of course if it was 1,000 percent, then the Board --6 7 there should be an impact on that. So, where do you draw the line between 19 9 percent great, pay no attention to that, but 1,000? 10 MR. WARREN: So, I think from -- for 11 purposes of determining whether individual rates are 12 reasonable or unreasonable, then it doesn't matter 13 whether it's 19 or 1,000 or a million. I don't think that's relevant. I think you've got to look at the 15 individual rates. 16 Now, for purposes of the statutory purpose 17 of the Board, you are instructed to draw a line and 18 determine where, whether railroads are adequate or 19 not, then it does matter. And I think 19 percent, 20 and to be clear it's 19 percent using the exact STB 21 methodology, using Professor Z's adjusted methodology 22 which, you know, includes intangible, non-goodwill

Page 106 1 intangible assets, and you know, does defer taxes in 2 a more, you know, rigorous way. It's about 9 3 percent. 4 But that's we think, is a more, you know, 5 reasonable line for the Board to be looking at in 6 terms of are railroads actually earning over their 7 cost of capital, on an accounting basis at a rate 8 that's you know, more than the typical company does. 9 Does that not answer your question? 10 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: 11 MR. WARREN: No? 12 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Can I try? 13 MR. WARREN: Yes. 14 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: So, are we at 10 percent, 15 20 percent, 100 percent, 1,000 percent. The question 16 really --17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: 1,000 mattered, did 18 anything else? 19 MR. ZMIJEWSKI: Well, to Matt it mattered. I think the statute is not clear, it mattered to me 20 21 because I would ask well, what's the context? 22 about everybody else? Right? You have to look at --

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 m l}$ these are very imprecise measures, so and I
- 2 apologize, because I don't think it came across where
- 3 I think we have something helpful to you, and that is
- 4 here's the distribution.
- 5 You pick your comparative group. Here's a
- 6 way to calculate your ROI minus cost of capital, and
- maybe there's three different ways you're going to do
- 8 it. And then you say, well, where do the railroads
- ⁹ fit in this distribution?
- 10 Are they at the 95th percentile? And that
- number could be 10, 100, 1,000, a million, I don't
- 12 know what it could be. It depends on how you do
- these calculations. It's more where did the
- railroads fit in the distribution? And if they were
- 15 at the very top consistently year after year, as a
- 16 regulator, you might be concerned about that if
- they're at the very bottom year after year, based on
- that calculation you wouldn't be concerned.
- 19 And I think, as regulators, and you all
- have a tough job because there isn't a formula that
- you can just use. That's just life. So, you have to
- 22 then decide well where in that distribution do you

- think it's a problem? And that's really what we're
- trying to tell you. You have to think about
- distribution and where you're fitting in the
- 4 distribution where you said, you know, that's a
- 5 yellow flag. Over here at this point, it's a red
- 6 flag. And I don't know, that's a policy decision for
- you all to make.
- 8 It's not something I can tell you. But
- 9 that's where I would suggest that you think about it,
- where they fit in the distribution, whatever metric
- 11 you use.
- 12 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: So, you know, it's -- I
- don't know if it's really been said, at least from
- this table, but obviously we all recognize that the
- 15 railroads need a lot of money to invest. This is a
- 16 very expensive business that they are in. But what I
- would like to hear, maybe from Scott, because you
- 18 know, while on the one hand the railroads are --
- they're way below, or quite a bit below the 19
- 20 percent number.
- And then you had your other three charts.
- 22 And the railroads are always less than your -- than

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 m l}$ the others. But yet, Scott, when I go to your
- charts, and sort of like how the stocks have
- increased over time, and really, it's one of your
- 4 charts looked pretty crazy, as like oh, my gosh, look
- 5 at those.
- But really, if you go to -- it's showing
- 7 that the rail stocks really are where other industry
- 8 stocks are. It's not that they're an outlier, even
- 9 though that we read like oh, my God, CSX, and UP
- 10 and just whomever you want to choose for the day.
- But if the railroads are so below their
- 12 cost of capital and not really earning what maybe an
- investor wants them to earn, why are their stocks
- currently on par with other -- I mean I'm not
- saying Amazon necessarily, but I'm just looking at
- 16 the chart that you have where they were all kind of
- 17 at the same point.
- MR. GROUP: I think you're referring to
- 19 the PE multiples for railroads in line with the S&P
- 20 500.
- 21 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Am I?
- MR. GROUP: I think that's what you are.

Page 110 1 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Yes, that's what I was 2 going to say. 3 MR. GROUP: I think that the railroads are 4 better businesses without a doubt, than they were 10, 5 20 years ago. And I think they can continue to 6 become better businesses than they are today, but I 7 would argue that they are not great businesses yet. 8 As the reported returns, the reported earnings and returns, I believe are overstated and thus, I think 10 these are -- like I said, better business than they 11 were 10 or 20 years ago, and I think that reflects 12 the stock performance, but I would still argue that 13 these are still not great businesses. 14 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Do you invest in them? 15 You don't have to answer that. 16 MR. GROUP: I'm not allowed to. 17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: You don't have to. 18 Neither are we. Actually, Mr. Ellig, I've been 19 entertained watching you listen. Would you like to 20 comment on what you've been hearing this morning 21 besides, of course, what you have said yourself? 22 MR. ELLIG: Oh, gosh, yeah. I think if

- there is maybe one point about thinking about revenue
- 2 adequacy that bears repeating from what the folks
- have said, it was what Kevin Murphy said, it's always
- 4 in comparison to an alternative. In comparison to
- 5 the next best alternative.
- And so, I think without rendering any
- ⁷ judgment on you know, the presentation we've seen
- 8 this morning, I think the concept of comparing
- 9 returns in the railroad industry with returns in
- 10 alternative industries, makes a lot of sense if
- 11 you're trying to figure out, you know, are railroads
- doing well, are they not doing well.
- 13 Are they, you know, are we about the point
- where, you know, Congress wanted them to be and so
- 15 forth. So, that's probably the most important
- economic insight that falls out of this. It's
- 17 always relevant relative to an alternative.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, I want to just
- 19 jump back to a point Marty was making in terms of
- 20 CAPEX and service and the like. You know, Dr. Ellig,
- you as part of the TRB Committee, talked about how
- 22 the Board could actually improve its oversight of

- rail service by collecting shipment-specific data,
- time stamps, some of which is already available at
- 3 the AID reader, through Rail Link.
- 4 Can you maybe elaborate on that a little
- 5 bit?
- 6 MR. ELLIG: Oh, gosh. I would just say
- you're asking me about the chapter that I probably
- 8 had the least to do with in figuring -- and how to
- 9 implement this stuff. But it's certainly made common
- 10 sense. Because if you look at, you know, if you look
- at the way that the performance of a lot of other
- deregulated industries has been evaluated, whether
- it's in railroads, trucking, airlines, natural gas,
- telecom, you know, you certainly want to look at
- 15 price and price competition and what have the trends
- been for price.
- But we also want to look at, you know,
- non-price aspects to see has it improved, has it gone
- up, gone down, whatever. And as I can recall, you
- 20 know, the existing state of scholarly literature on
- this looking at railroads, they were able to -- and
- 22 this was some studies done at Brookings back in the

- late '80s. You know, they were able to look at some
- things like delivery time and standard deviation of
- delivery time, you know, get some idea about reliable
- 4 service, but it was pretty inexact.
- 5 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And the reason why I
- 6 asked, is because there was a discussion about the
- 7 relationship between CAPEX and service. And, you
- 8 know, from your standpoint, you know, from an
- 9 economics standpoint, doesn't it make more sense to
- 10 consider service as the same way as we consider price
- and not focus as much just on CAPEX because you could
- 12 have a high CAPEX percentage as a percentage of
- revenue by investing in track that's not very
- 14 productive, by getting a bad deal on your
- 15 locomotives, or whatever. And so, you know, from
- 16 your perspective, does it make more sense for the
- 17 Board to be focused on its core regulatory
- 18 responsibilities like service and prices and the
- 19 like, as opposed to kind of, interjecting itself in
- 20 kind of CAPEX, CAPEX expenditures and percentages and
- these types of things?
- MR. ELLIG: Okay, I'm going to say

- 1 something a little bit dangerous because I'm going to
- 2 make reference to another issue in another industry
- 3 that people feel very strongly about, and it's kind
- 4 of become a lightning rod. And I'll try to do it as
- 5 delicately as possible, and I ask that folks just
- 6 forget about the lightning rod aspect and focus on
- ⁷ the analytical point.
- 8 Okay, that's a long introductory. Yeah, I
- 9 was Chief Economist at the FCC for a year dealing
- with, you know, a highly contentious issue which was
- the reclassification of broadband from you know,
- 12 Title 2 back to Title 1.
- And one of the big issues, one of the big
- 14 empirical economic issues there was does that
- 15 classification of broadband matter at all for
- investment? And why did we care about investment? I
- 17 think the FCC order was very clear on this that
- investment itself is not a benefit.
- Investment is a cost. But it's a leading
- indicator of thing -- it can be a leading indicator
- of things like service quality, growth productivity
- 22 and other things. So, yeah, we want to be careful

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 m l}$ not to say investment is the social benefit that
- we're aiming for, but it tells us something about
- what some stream of services we are likely to get in
- 4 the future from the things that the investment is
- 5 being made in.
- And so, in that sense, I think it does
- 7 make sense to look at, you know, how are the things
- 8 we are doing affecting investment. But I think it
- 9 also makes sense to say to, you know, look at things
- 10 like quality, service and price as well.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: But as an indicator
- 12 not as an end?
- MR. ELLIG: Right, right. Yeah, I mean
- 14 the things that the customers ultimately care about
- that are closer to social benefits, or you know,
- what's happening to price, what's happening to
- 17 service.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Just a few more
- 19 areas I just wanted to cover three or four questions.
- 20 Scott, one of your graphs shows a sharp reduction in
- 21 capital expenditures beginning in around 2015, and
- then it sort of ticked back up again in 2017 by the

Page 116 1 railroads. 2 Is that a result of pressures from Wall 3 Street to cut capital expenditures? We've been 4 hearing a lot on these quarterly calls about Wall 5 Street analysts pressing railroads to cut their 6 capital expenditures down below 16 percent and so 7 forth. If you look at this chart, MR. GROUP: 9 it's CAPEX as a percentage of revenue and I would 10 just remind you that in 2015 and '16, you saw a 11 meaningful reduction in revenue. So, if you just 12 think about that denominator, revenue falling, it 13 naturally it makes -- it's influencing the CAPEX as a 14 percentage of revenue calculation. 15 And I would just remind and if you look at 16 the last 5 years, you've had meaningful rail volume 17 declines in 3 of those 5 years. So, I think more so 18 than anything, that's the reason why CAPEX has come 19 I would just say, the last thing I would just 20 say if you look over any, you know, multi-year period

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of time, there is -- the rails are spending more in a

5 year period than the prior 5 year period, than the

- 1 prior 5 year period, and there is just a very, very
- 2 clear relationship between us as margins and earnings
- have increased and stock prices have gone up, so has
- 4 capital expenditures.
- 5 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But, would you
- 6 agree that there has been some pressure on Wall
- 7 Street to reduce the percentage of revenue that's
- 8 spent on CAPEX?
- 9 MR. GROUP: To some extent.
- 10 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: And do you think
- that's good for the industry?
- MR. GROUP: I think where you're seeing
- the most meaningful reduction in capital spending is
- on locomotives, and not at all on any sort of
- 15 maintenance, CAPEX or technology-related spending.
- 16 And I think the reality is that the railroads entered
- 17 2015 expecting a period of significant volume growth
- and quite the opposite happened, and I think the
- industry ended up with probably too many
- 20 locomotives. So, I would think this is more of a
- holiday than any sort of permanent reduction.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, my concern, I

- think I made -- I'm not sure I actually differ a
- 2 little bit with Patrick. But since CAPEX is such a
- 3 long-term expenditure and a long-term planning, that
- 4 if there is too much pressure from Wall Street to
- 5 reduce CAPEX expenditures, and clearly, based on the
- 6 calls I've heard, we may actually -- it's like the
- ⁷ boiling frog.
- 8 You know, 10 years from now we've may find
- 9 infrastructure inadequate and were we not doing
- 10 something about it when we saw this coming. And it
- just, that trend continues from Wall Street towards,
- 12 you know, operating revenues, ratios as well as CAPEX
- 13 expenditures.
- 14 It might result in diminution of service
- 15 at a point where now it's too late to catch up. So,
- that's a trend that I think we should be keeping an
- 17 eye on. I'm not sure if we should do anything about
- ¹⁸ it.
- 19 You referenced, and there were many
- 20 references yesterday as well, from the railroads that
- railroads, unlike their competitors pay 100 percent
- of the infrastructure. Would you agree with me that

- that's really an overstatement? We just had a tour
- of the Create Project, which is costing 3 or 4
- billion dollars, of which the railroads are paying 25
- 4 percent in Chicago, and I'm sure you know what I'm
- 5 talking about.
- 6 There are all kinds of federal grants,
- 7 Patrick authored some of them, that provide funds for
- 8 bridges and other infrastructure, so I don't know
- 9 what the percentage is. I'm sure it's not a huge
- 10 percentage, but it is accurate to say, isn't it, that
- railroads pay 100 percent of the infrastructure
- 12 compared to everybody else?
- MR. GROUP: I think that's probably fair.
- 14 I was -- I think it's directional, if you think about
- 15 it in relations to the trucking industry, where
- 16 clearly the highways are not built by the trucking
- 17 companies themselves.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, they're built
- 19 in part by the gas diesel tax that the trucking
- 20 companies pay. So, you know, I think the rhetoric
- isn't helpful. That's all I'm suggesting. Now, I
- 22 sat there in the Create meeting and wondered why the

Page 120 1 taxpayers of Illinois are spending 3 billion dollars 2 to provide faster service through Chicago for freight 3 railroads which are making billions and billions of 4 dollars a year. 5 So, to me there is a broader question 6 Mr. Ellig, you have talked a lot about the 7 inadequacies of URCs. Is any part of your concern 8 about URCs that the data on which these cost calculations are made, is apparently quite old? that affect the accuracy of it as well as the fact 10 11 that it doesn't always relate to very accurate cost? 12 MR. ELLIG: Yeah, I think that would 13 affect the accuracy of it as well. I have not dug 14 into URCs deeply enough to be able to say, oh, hey, 15 you know, there are these categories of things where 16 the data is clearly antiquated and just isn't doing 17 what we wanted to do, and these other things are 18 okay.

- 19 I'd say the more significant problem is
- that you know, the variable cost measure probably
- isn't telling us what we think it's telling us.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: So, when -- just to

- ¹ finish this point, it came out yesterday. When we
- 2 say 76 percent of the traffic is competitive, or at
- least that's what the railroads tell us, that's based
- 4 on the 180 calculation. Is there any way for us to
- 5 have any idea whether it's 76 percent, or 90 percent,
- 6 or 40 percent?
- Is it just a dart against the board?
- MR. MURPHY: Dr. Caves didn't use the 180
- 9 in his, as I recall. He did not use that to come up
- with the 76 percent number. It turns out it's pretty
- similar to what you get if you use the 180 and some
- other methodologies, but his was not based on 180.
- 13 His was based on structural measures of the existence
- of competition.
- MR. ELLIG: He intentionally -- besides
- 16 URC in every aspect.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: The railroads tell
- 18 us that it's 76 percent. Other than Doctor Caves,
- 19 there's a vast majority -- I think AAR's presentation
- 20 is the vast majority are competitive, and I think
- that's based on the 180 as I understand it. I mean
- 22 can we draw any conclusions from the 180 measurement

Page 122 1 if URCs is as inaccurate, and I don't disagree with 2 you, but? 3 Yeah, I certainly wouldn't use MR. ELLIG: 4 that as the main indicator. I think it's a lot more 5 accurate to look at things like the actual 6 availability of competitive options and you know, there's a lot of econometric studies of rail industry 7 8 where they're trying to figure out what things determine rail rates. And they do look at things 10 like, you know, competition from another railroad, 11 proximity to barge competition, you know, how 12 practical is it to have truck competition. 13 In fact, a lot of the rate benchmarking 14 work that went into the transportation and research 15 board report, also does that kind of thing and pretty 16 well specifies you know, here are the places you can 17 go look to find the data on those kind of things. 18 And finally, I'd suggest that a better or 19 a more reliable cross check on calculations based on

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dominance proceeding, that a more reliable thing to

do would be to do some rate benchmarking to look at

180 figure, and I suggested this in the market

- how rates for a particular shipment compare to the
- distribution of competitive rates for similar
- 3 commodities and so forth, to get some idea of -- you
- 4 know, how does it compare to prices in markets that
- 5 we think are competitive.
- Now, you know, the Board, in its judgment,
- may still decide that there's going to be a certain
- 8 differential there in order to implement differential
- 9 pricing. But at least getting an idea of where
- 10 the -- where a rate to a captive shipper is compared
- to the rates, the distribution rates, they're
- 12 probably competitive. I think that's a lot more
- reliable than looking at the 180 number.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Just -- and I
- realize this is beyond our jurisdiction, it's up to
- 16 Congress. But if you were -- ran the zoo here, would
- 17 you then recommend a different threshold for being
- able to file a rate case, other than the 180
- measurement?
- MR. ELLIG: No, I wouldn't' recommend a
- different threshold. I would just recommend looking
- 22 at -- as I think the Board proposed in the market

- dominance proceeding, you know, look at several
- different indicators. 180 is one of them. Also,
- 3 some other ones.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But if you're under
- 5 180, you can't function. That's what I was asking.
- 6 Should that be a different measuring stick? If
- 7 Congress were here, and I asked you yesterday, will
- you have a recommendation for them, would you
- 9 recommend a different measuring stick before you can
- 10 file a rate case other than the 180, given the
- 11 concerns with URCs?
- MR. ELLIG: No, I think given my concerns
- with URCs, I don't think we have the relevant
- 14 knowledge to figure out what some other appropriate
- 15 percentage threshold might be.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, so that's
- 17 what I'm asking. Should there be different kind of
- 18 measuring sticks than a percentage, such as the
- market dominance test?
- MR. ELLIG: Yeah, yeah, no, I realize
- there are statutory reasons that you have to look at
- 22 the 180, but yeah, I would much rather look at, you

- hnow, the kinds of things that anti-trust agencies
- would look at, which is what are the actual
- 3 competitive options and you know, how the rates
- 4 compare and how do the markets.
- 5 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Just one final
- 6 question. Somebody asked about whether any other
- 7 agency which regulates industries uses the economic
- 8 return definition and Professor Z, you mentioned that
- 9 you had this calculation in a DOJ anti-trust case, so
- 10 that's one.
- Is there any other example that we could
- 12 look to as to how some other agency has defined this
- 13 term that you know of, other than the one case you
- were involved in, anybody?
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: I've been involved in
- 16 several cases where the calculation is -- and it's
- 17 not a calculation that you could easily do if you
- could do at all, is an internal rate of return
- 19 calculation like Discover, Amex litigation was the
- same thing.
- 21 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But other than this
- 22 kind of a litigated setting at DOJ, is there any

- 1 agency that does anything like what we do, has a
- definition that we could be schooled on?
- MR. ZMIJEWSKI: I would have to go look.
- 4 I don't know about the other agencies.
- 5 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Alright, if there
- 6 is I'd like to see it, so we can find what others
- ⁷ have done. Thank you.
- 8 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I just have one
- ⁹ final question for Mr. Group. You know that there
- is -- you mentioned earlier in the discussion about
- some of the decline in coal, which is obviously has
- been a bedrock for the rail industry for a number of
- 13 years. And I think there's some references
- throughout other witnesses' testimony about, you
- 15 know, truck competition and the potential for
- 16 advances and autonomous trucks and other things that
- 17 could heighten competition in some regards.
- I guess I'm wondering as you see it, what
- does the financial health of the rail industry look
- like in 10 years? And, you now, how should we
- generally be thinking about the gold carriers
- 22 achieving revenue adequacy with those pressures?

Page 127 1 MR. GROUP: Yeah, so as I said earlier, I 2 think clearly the rails are financially healthy and 3 in better position than they were 10 years ago. there are clearly some real competitive threats over 5 the next decade, be it from -- I don't think anyone 6 would argue that coal is and will remain in secular 7 decline. At some point you have the risk of your 9 biggest competitor seeing materially improved cost 10 structure if you move to autonomous and electric 11 trucks. So, the competitive threats are real, so I 12 think that the -- I still believe though that we want 13 to create a regulatory backdrop that incentivizes the rails to continue to invest -- to compete against 15 what could become a tougher competitor. 16 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you all very 17 much. We greatly appreciate it. And a reminder the 18 record will be open until February 13th. We will now 19 go to the next panel. Panel VI and we're going to 20 start with NGFA. 21 We'll begin with Sharon Clark from NGFA. 22 MS. CLARK: Good morning Chairman Begeman,

- 1 Vice Chairman Fuchs and Commissioner Oberman. I
- 2 could say good morning by five minutes, so we're
- doing good. My name is Sharon Clark, and I am Senior
- Vice President of Transportation and Regulatory
- 5 Affairs at Purdue AgriBusiness in Salisbury,
- 6 Maryland.
- 7 I am presenting this testimony on behalf
- 8 of the National Grain and Feed Association in my
- 9 capacity as a member of its Executive Committee and
- 10 Board of Directors. This supplements the written
- 11 materials that NGFA submitted to the Board on
- November 26th.
- I am accompanied by Tom Wilcox, Principal
- of the firm, GKG Law, PC, who is NGFA's
- 15 transportation counsel and will be supplementing my
- testimony by discussing some of the legal issues
- 17 relevant to the rate reform task force's
- 18 recommendations.
- NGFA is the nation's largest and most
- 20 all-encompassing agribusiness trade association. It
- 21 consists of more than 1,100 member companies that
- operate between 7,000 and 8,000 facilities that

- annually store, handle, market, process and export
- 2 approximately 70 percent of U.S. grains and oil
- 3 seeds.
- 4 NGFA commends the Board for conducting
- 5 this hearing and Chairman Begeman for establishing
- 6 the task force to critically evaluate and develop
- 7 recommendations to improve the Board's existing rate
- 8 review standards and processes.
- 9 We also thank the task force for
- 10 fulfilling that charge by producing an impactful
- 11 report containing a suite of innovative and well
- 12 researched recommendations. NGFA believes that the
- 13 task force accurately identifies systemic problems
- and flaws with the Board's existing rate challenge
- 15 methodologies and processes, and that its
- 16 recommendations that are at the focus on this hearing
- 17 are a very reasonable attempt to address the nexus
- between revenue adequacy and rate regulation.
- 19 NGFA believes the need to address these
- issues has become more urgent given the ever-growing
- 21 exercise of market power by Class I railroads,
- 22 following the consolidation of the North American

Page 130 1 rail marketplace into regional duopolies and the 2 adoption by most of them of some form of the 3 so-called precision scheduled railroad operating 4 model. 5 In this current market environment, 6 railroads are imposing ever-increasing freight rates 7 and commercially unfair demurrage and accessorial 8 charges and rules, while also dictating the frequency 9 and conditions under which they will provide service. 10 NGFA wishes to reiterate and amplify its 11 written testimony on 3 of the 4 task force 12 recommendations, as well as discuss the legal 13 authority of the Board to develop proposed rules on 14 each. 15 First, NGFA strongly supports the task 16 force's recommendation that the Board establish the 17 definition of long-term revenue adequacy. While 18 NGFA, in its written testimony, noted it had no

organizations and companies, that the proposed

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recommendations for altering the task force's

recommended definition, we do concur with the

testimony submitted by several other shipper

- definition is extremely conservative, and tends to
- over-emphasize the effects of recessions on the
- 3 finances of railroads.
- Indeed, Class I railroad carriers reported
- 5 earnings in 2019, despite significant reductions in
- 6 the volume of freight being handled, provide ample
- 7 evidence that they profit handsomely even in a down
- 8 market. The positive financial trends in the rail
- 9 industry is further evidenced by its staggering
- 10 return on investment data, cited in the task force
- 11 report.
- 12 The tendency for carriers to remain
- 13 long-term revenue adequate after achieving that
- 14 status provides strong assurance that the Board can
- 15 place reasonable constraints on rates long-term
- 16 revenue adequate railroads charge captive shippers
- without undermining the railroad's profitability or
- 18 reinvestment in our infrastructures.
- NGFA also reiterates its request that the
- 20 Board take this opportunity to refine the concept of
- railroad revenue adequacy by developing a more
- 22 comprehensive, accurate and defensible approach for

- 1 evaluating the financial soundness of Class I
- ² railroads in an era of duopolies and substantially
- 3 reduced rail-to-rail competition.
- 4 This could be accomplished in part by
- 5 completing the pending proceedings on the methodology
- for determining railroad revenue adequacy in EP 722,
- 7 and the proceeding to re-evaluate the cost of
- 8 equity capital calculation in EP 664.
- In any event, NGFA believes strongly that
- developing a definition of long-term revenue adequacy
- is an essential element of rate reasonableness
- 12 standards, such as the rate increase constraint, or
- 13 RIC, proposed by the task force, the benchmark
- methodology proposed by the American Chemistry
- 15 Council, or other such methodologies that apply to
- 16 revenue adequate railroads.
- 17 The Board has considerable discretion to
- develop a definition it believes is economically
- 19 sounds and legally defensible. We recommend that the
- 20 Board not make perfect the enemy of the good in
- finalizing its definition of long-term revenue
- 22 adequacy.

	Page 133
1	Second, NGFA strongly supports the task
2	force recommendation to implement an RIC on long-term
3	revenue adequate railroads' ability to differentially
4	price freight rates on shippers that subsequently
5	file a formal complaint and demonstrate market
6	dominance.
7	NGFA believes the clear intent of
8	Congress, when enacting the Staggers Rail Act, was
9	that once revenue adequacy was achieved, a carrier's
10	freedom to charge higher rates to its captive
11	shippers in large part to achieve revenue adequate
12	status, would be curtailed in some manner.
13	NGFA also supports the task force's
14	recommendation that for shippers whose rates exceed
15	the RIC, carriers would be prohibited from raising
16	their non-contract, non-exempt rates beyond an
17	established threshold by more than the rate of
18	inflation, thereby limiting the ability of long-term
19	revenue adequate carriers to differentially priced
20	traffic.
21	NGFA strongly disagrees with the
22	Association of American Railroads contention that the

- 1 RIC constitutes an unlawful constraint on system-wide
- ² railroad earnings. The task force clearly stated
- 3 that the RIC would apply only on an individual
- 4 movement basis, upon the filing of a complaint and
- 5 the requisite showing of market dominance.
- As NGFA has stated in other proceedings,
- 7 the mere adoption of a new methodology that might
- 8 afford captive shippers some rate relief will not
- 9 result in an avalanche of rate cases and systematic
- 10 economic disruption that the railroads allege will
- occur.
- 12 Third, NGFA supports the task force's
- proposal that so-called bottleneck road protections
- should be suspending or overruled for railroads
- determined to be long-term revenue adequate. By
- 16 that, we presume the task force means that a
- 17 bottleneck railroad that serves the same origin or
- destination, as an alternative railroad, would be
- 19 required to provide a rate for transportation over
- its bottleneck segment, without the shipper having to
- 21 make a case for competitive access under the Board's
- 22 rules and applicable precedent, as well as without

- having to first enter into a contract for the
- 2 non-bottleneck portion of the overall movement. The
- ³ latter part is helpful to agricultural shippers
- 4 because many do not ship by contract. NGFA does not
- 5 interpret the task force recommendations to mean that
- 6 the shippers could pick and choose interchanges, as
- 7 contended by the AAR, and that the Board will remain
- 8 the ultimate authority for such determination.
- 9 In short, NGFA understands the task
- 10 force's recommendation to merely facilitate
- 11 competition between railroads above the bottleneck of
- 12 feasible interchanges. NGFA agrees that there is no
- policy-basis for imposing the barrier of the
- competitive access rules to protect a long-term
- 15 revenue adequate railroad's desire for long haul
- 16 revenues.
- 17 Tom's testimony will add additional detail
- on NGFA's view of the applicable legal rules. Our
- 19 written testimony recommends two additional elements
- that we believe would be appropriate for suspending
- or overruling the bottleneck rules that are pertinent
- 22 to shipments of agricultural products.

Page 136 1 I would like to add a third that 2 previously has been cited by NGFA, namely, to the 3 extent a long-term revenue adequate railroad responds 4 to a request for a rate over a bottleneck segment, by 5 establishing a charge to switch the trains of the 6 alternate railroad. 7 Or, if the Board modifies its reciprocal 8 switching rules, and orders reciprocal switching over 9 the bottleneck segment, there should be clear 10 standards that prevent such charges from becoming an economic barrier to using an alternative carrier. 11 NGFA previously has suggested a rebuttable 12 13 presumption, cost-based approach that the railroad 14 must justify if the switch charge is challenged. Let 15 me conclude by again expressing NGFA's appreciation 16 to the Board for conducting this hearing and for the 17 serious attention and considerable time and effort 18 you and your staffs have expended on these critical 19 issues. 20 We urge the Board to proceed by issuing 21 proposed rules on these task force recommendations. 22 It is vitally important that the Board restore some

- 1 semblance of balanced regulatory oversight in
- today's rail marketplace, precisely to ensure that
- 3 the freight rail industry continues to be a viable
- 4 part of our national transportation system, including
- for American agriculture. At this time, I'll hand
- 6 the podium over to Tom.
- 7 MR. WILCOX: Good afternoon Chairman
- 8 Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs and Member Oberman. I'm
- ⁹ going to definitely keep to our time, so I would
- 10 first want to congratulate the Board and the task
- 11 force on your efforts. The voluminous responses of
- 12 the AAR and its Class I railroad members, and their
- experts in opposition to these recommendations, are
- proof that you're on to something substantive and
- 15 meaningful for rail shippers.
- NGFA has done a preliminary review of the
- written submissions, and we appreciate that the
- record will be held open until February 12th so we
- 19 can have a more thorough response, but for now, we
- 20 offer a few initial observations on the AAR's written
- 21 submission.
- First, the statements -- there's a lot of

- 1 statements that the railroad academic witnesses and
- 2 references to academic studies showing revenue
- 3 adequacy has been achieved through market forces,
- 4 competitive environments. There's no reason to
- 5 suspect the improving financial health of the
- 6 industry has resulted from inappropriate exercise of
- 7 market power, statements like that. Those are all --
- 8 and NGFA has testified in their comments before,
- 9 they're bellied by their real world experience of
- 10 NGFA's members and other rail shippers.
- If there was really, truly competition in
- 12 the industry, you would not see rates increasing to
- 13 the extent they have increased. You would not see
- 14 contracts without any service standards. You would
- 15 not see fuel surcharges that over-recover cost, a lot
- of things that you would see in a meaningfully
- 17 competitive environment.
- Second, AAR's made an argument that their
- 19 revenue adequacy constraint should be rejected after
- 20 34 years because it violates the statute. I think
- you heard a little bit about they've had some
- 22 discussion about, this yesterday, we believe that is

- 1 just wrong. At a minimum, the constraint is fully
- 2 supported by 49 U.S. Code 1016 which we discussed
- 3 about yesterday, the coal rate guidelines and, of
- 4 course, the Third Circuit's decision in 1987, where
- 5 they specifically held "the four constraints in the
- 6 final guidelines are consistent with the 4R Act in
- 7 Staggers Act." In that case, the Third Circuit also
- 8 talked about imposing revenue adequacy as a ceiling
- ⁹ in a couple of instances.
- 10 As Sharon said that the AAR characterizes
- the rate increase constraint as a cap is belied by
- 12 the, you know, the terms of the report itself and the
- 13 fact that you would have, you know, just a small
- amount of shippers filing complaints. It's not an
- overall system-wide cap.
- So, on the bottleneck, I'll just hit the
- bottleneck issues. Again, we do not believe the
- 18 carriers have a statutory right to the long haul.
- 19 There was some discussion about this yesterday. The
- obligations to uphold a railroad's routing references
- 21 are qualified in Section 10705, that also requires
- 22 only that the STB must give reasonable preference to

- 1 the carrier originating the traffic. I want to
- 2 discuss a case that I don't believe was discussed in
- 3 the AAR submission that connects its case from 2012.
- In there, the Board stated there is "a
- 5 broad variety of public interest factors that go into
- 6 10705 determinations." And it even said the relevant
- 7 factors are "Subject to change with each analysis."
- 8 In that case, the Board found that, you know, BNSF
- 9 had actually a preference for short haul.
- They didn't want to transport chlorine to
- 11 Kansas City, and the Board found that BNSF's
- 12 preference for a particular route interchange point
- was unreasonable under 10705 and contrary to the
- 14 public interest under the facts of that case and
- 15 ordered that BNSF could not stop the chlorine in
- 16 Spokane and had to take it to Kansas City.
- I guess I will stop, because I don't want
- 18 to go over our time, and just answer questions about
- 19 the issues. Thank you.
- 20 MR. PATELLI: Good afternoon Chairman
- 21 Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs and Commissioner
- Oberman. My name is John Patelli, head of Regulatory

- and Federal Affairs. It is my pleasure to introduce
- 2 my colleagues, Ray Atkins, outside counsel for us at
- 3 Sidley Austin, and my colleague Sean Pelkey, Vice
- 4 President Finance and Treasurer for CSX, who will
- 5 discuss CSX's process for making investments and the
- 6 impact that a system-wide earnings based constraint
- 7 would have on those investment decisions.
- 8 MR. PELKEY: Thank you John. Members of
- ⁹ the Board, it's a pleasure to be here with you today.
- 10 My role as Vice President of Finance and Treasurer,
- includes responsibility for reviewing CSX's capital
- allocation, capital budget, business plans and
- 13 forecasts.
- I speak with nearly 15 years of direct
- 15 finance experience at CSX and provide you my
- 16 perspective on how earning's based rate regulation
- 17 could dramatically impact our ability to make capital
- investments in the future.
- I want to begin by discussing the cost of
- 20 capital and what it represents. Cost of capital has
- 21 a significant influence on our investment decisions
- 22 as a company. The simple investing principal is that

Page 142 1 those who take on more risk require a higher return. 2 All costs of capital calculations reflect 3 this reality, including the one used annually by the 4 Surface Transportation Board. As you can see on 5 slide 1, equity holders demand higher returns than 6 bond holders, and the return demanded by both 7 increases with leverage. 8 A stable company like ours attempts to 9 balance debt and equity to maximize the value of the 10 If CSX cannot provide returns above the cost 11 of capital, many of our current investors will 12 redirect their capital to other companies not 13 constrained by regulatory caps. 14 The investors who remain will not be 15 willing to accept sustainably lower returns. 16 Constrained by potential regulation, our shareholders 17 will likely force us to seek acquisitions completely 18 unrelated to the railroad business that will distract 19 our core focus on serving our rail customers 20 efficiently and reliably. 21 We will also be pressed to reduce capital

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investments in the railroad. As you've heard in

Page 143 previous testimony, the vast majority of S&P 500 2 companies earn more than their cost of capital. Ιf 3 their investors demand this kind of performance, it's clear ours do as well. 5 This is the reality of the financial 6 marketplace. Starting on slide 2, I'll try to 7 provide you more insight into how we make investment 8 decisions. The net present value or NPV, of an investment is positive, if the value of the future 10 cash flows discounted our cost of capital exceeds the 11 investment. 12 Return on invested capital is essentially 13 the rate of return generated by all investments in our enterprise over time. If our return on capital 15 exceeds our cost of capital, we can justify 16 continued investment in the business. While return 17 on capital is traditionally a backward looking 18 metric, we look at all potential investments on a 19 forward looking basis, using the assets replacement 20 cost in our analysis. 21 To evaluate strategic investments, we 22 discount the future cash flows by what we call the

- 1 hurdle rate. That hurdle rate references the cost of
- 2 capital includes a small premium for risk. Project
- 3 risk can include unanticipated cost overruns,
- 4 expected benefits that don't materialize, and even
- 5 regulatory uncertainties.
- 6 When the rate of return or IRR, of any
- 7 project exceeds the hurdle rate, the project has a
- 8 positive NPV. And importantly, for CSX to pursue a
- 9 strategic investment of any kind, we must ensure the
- 10 return exceeds the hurdle rate.
- Slide 3 illustrates a potential
- 12 hypothetical freight car investment we evaluate
- 13 regularly. In this example, you'll see how CSX's
- significantly improved service and efficiency levels
- 15 help support and encourage future investments.
- Now, let's look at the scenario before CSX
- implemented its new operating model. In this
- 18 example, we explore the purchase of a freight car
- with a replacement cost of \$100,000. We expect that
- car to generate annual revenues of \$40,000 and an
- operating ratio of 70 percent. On the surface, this
- 22 seems like a good investment. We increase both

- revenue and earnings. The problem, however, is that
- the cash flow, when discounted back at the hurdle
- 3 rate, in light of the initial investment, actually
- 4 results in a negative NPV.
- 5 One might suggest that we should just
- 6 lower our hurdle rate and be satisfied with the new
- ⁷ business. But in this example, our investors simply
- 8 would not tolerate it. Low return investments would
- 9 disadvantage us in the marketplace. Remember the
- 10 expectation and norm is for a company to earn more
- than the cost of capital.
- Now let me illustrate how this investment
- 13 premise has changed for us after the significant
- service and efficiency improvements we've made over
- 15 the last few years. In this example, the freight
- car costs the same \$100,000. However, by tightening
- schedules and operating more reliably, we're now able
- 18 to turn our cars approximately 15 percent faster
- 19 across the network.
- 20 As a result, this same investment can
- 21 actually produce more annual revenue. Instead of
- 22 handling 20 loads a year, this car now handles 23.

- 1 In addition, the higher revenue turns into higher
- income because margins increase with lower overtime,
- maintenance and other asset related costs. Now we've
- 4 got \$46,000 of revenue at a 60 percent operating
- 5 ratio, and more than 1.5 times the operating income.
- 6 Since the NPV is positive, we can now
- ⁷ justify investing in this car with the expectation
- 8 that the return will exceed our cost of capital. The
- 9 improvements we've made under the new operating plan
- 10 also benefit our customers by making it more
- economically feasible for them to invest and grow
- 12 their own fleets.
- 13 Let me pause here to draw on a fundamental
- question raised at the hearing. If we extrapolate
- 15 the investment on the left, as illustrative of all
- 16 rail investments, would we call this revenue
- 17 adequate? Its returns are below the cost of capital,
- 18 so likely not.
- 19 How about the example on the right? This
- investment earns above the cost of capital, and if
- this were representative of every investment CSX has
- 22 made, we might now say that CSX is revenue adequate.

- 1 But would it be just to say that the rate charged to
- the customer on the right is unreasonable, when on
- 3 the left it was perfectly reasonable?
- If you followed the math, you've probably
- figured out the rates are the same, \$2,000 in each
- 6 scenario. Further, who has a right to the profits
- 7 that have been generated through this transformation
- 8 and hypothetical investment? Should our shippers
- 9 get a lower rate because of the efficiencies we've
- 10 generated? The fact is that the owners of our
- 11 company have a right to the increased cash flows that
- 12 are a result of this investment.
- 13 I'm happy to expound further in Q and A,
- but our owners get to access that cash in several
- ways -- dividends, share buybacks, or simply
- 16 liquidating their investment whenever they think they
- 17 can earn a greater return elsewhere. Such a return,
- in and of itself, cannot be equated with revenue
- 19 adequacy.
- 20 As this example illustrates, CSX has
- improved operating and financial performance empowers
- us to invest in projects aimed at enhancing our

- ability to compete and win more traffic. We've made
- 2 recent changes to our capital budgeting process to
- 3 allocate more funds to strategic projects,
- 4 encouraging innovation, growth and automation.
- 5 When we make these investment decisions,
- 6 we always use replacement cost. As you've heard, the
- 7 depreciated asset base that helps form the
- 8 denominator of our return on invested capital,
- 9 severely under represents our true investment needs.
- 10 CSX replacement cost far exceeds net book
- value, which as of year-end 2018, was approximately
- 12 28 billion dollars, excluding land. Nearly
- 13 two-thirds of the net book value is made up of three
- 14 asset classes -- track, locomotives, and cars. These
- 15 assets have easy to estimate current replacement
- 16 costs, and the average replacement cost of those
- 17 assets is roughly three-times their net book value.
- Using this three times multiplier for the
- 19 remainder of the assets gets you to a replacement
- 20 cost in excess of 80 billion dollars. Given that the
- other assets include engineering structures, like
- 22 bridges and tunnels that have extremely long lives

- and extraordinarily low network values, the three
- times multiplier is likely conservative for this
- 3 category.
- 4 This slide demonstrates how a return on
- 5 replacement costs would clearly come far below our
- 6 cost of capital. We have to evaluate our investment
- decisions based on what it costs to replace assets
- 8 now, not what those investments are worth on the
- 9 books.
- 10 Over the last 10 years, CSX has invested
- an astounding 22 billion dollars on new assets,
- 12 representing two-thirds of our operating cash flows.
- 13 These investments include over 5,000 miles of track,
- 14 33 million ties replaced, and nearly 550 new
- 15 locomotives.
- Importantly, this year marks the most
- 17 miles of rail and number of cross ties replaced since
- 18 2015. We continue to reap the benefit of prior
- 19 locomotive purchases, as our average fleet is newer
- 20 and more reliable. We remain committed to investing
- in the safety and reliability of our core
- 22 infrastructure.

Page 150 1 Turning to our capital allocation 2 framework on slide 6, investment in core 3 infrastructure is our first priority and represents 4 in excess of a billion dollars annually for CSX. 5 Beyond that, we continuously have discussions with 6 our Board of Directors regarding capital allocation. 7 Our priorities are to balance returns with 8 risk. As Mr. Beyer described yesterday, we 9 continuously explore strategic high-return 10 investments that drive efficiency and organic growth 11 to our existing business. We also explore inorganic 12 growth opportunities, such as small strategic bolt-on 13 acquisitions that may help drive business to the core 14 rail network. 15 These growth investments must exceed our 16 cost of capital as I've described, accounting for the 17 risk inherent in the proposed projects. Once we've 18 exhausted these potential options, we could choose to 19 hold onto the cash. As you know, if you have any of 20 your investments in deposits today, returns are low, 21 below 2 percent for us and far below the cost of

capital.

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Page 151 We could also use the cash to repay debt, 2 but given the low interest rate environment and the 3 importance of a balanced capital structure, buying down debt is also not a very attractive strategy. 5 That leaves us with dividends and share repurchases 6 which sit somewhere in the middle. 7 When we utilize cash to provide a 8 dividend, we give that cash back to the investor, allowing them to invest elsewhere and earn the return 10 they demand. Lastly, we can buy back our shares, 11 where we give investors a choice. Those that want to 12 cash out and utilize their proceeds for alternative 13 investments can do so when we repurchase shares. Those that prefer to stay invested can do 15 so as well. For companies, buybacks preserve 16 flexibility by avoiding commitments to higher and 17 possibly unsustainable dividends, which tend to be 18 viewed as fixed costs. 19 Buybacks also reflect confidence in the 20 future of the company and in our ability to generate 21 returns above the cost of capital. To be clear, we

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buy back our shares precisely because we think there

- will be an increasing amount of high return
- 2 investments available in the future that will help
- drive efficient, reliable service and provide us a
- 4 return adequate to justify those investments.
- 5 When this happens, the remaining owners in
- 6 the company each have a greater share in this
- ⁷ success. However, if our company was constrained
- 8 from earning returns above the cost of capital, there
- 9 are three hypothetical outcomes. And I could state
- 10 confidently that two of them will not be tolerated by
- 11 our share owners.
- The first outcome is to continue investing
- in high return projects which typically possess a
- 14 higher risk profile. Despite rate caps that benefit
- 15 a subset of shippers and are designed to keep CSX at
- or near its cost of capital, we don't believe that
- our investors will allow us to let this happen, and
- 18 therefore would discourage us from future, strategic
- 19 investments.
- The second alternative is that we keep
- investing in a combination of high return projects
- 22 and balance this by investing in an equal amount of

Page 153 lower return projects. This would increase our 2 investment base and keep our returns in line with our 3 cost of capital. But why would we ever do this? Each strategic project, including our 5 investments in advance technology and the significant 6 commitment we just made to expand capacity of the 7 Howard Street Tunnel in Baltimore, carries 8 significant risk. If we're in a world where CSX is constrained from earning returns above the cost of 10 capital, there's no reward, and we retain all the 11 downside risk. 12 Simply put, investors would not tolerate 13 the balance required in this scenario to invest in 14 low return projects. The final and only feasible 15 outcome would be to reduce our capital spending. We 16 would have no incentive to invest in high return 17 projects. We would continue to maintain or replace 18 assets, at the end of their lifecycle, but would stop 19 investing in strategic projects. 20 Turning to slide 8, I'll close with the 21 sentiment that CSX is delivering exactly the kind of 22 results through the first three quarters of 2019 that

- 1 should be encouraged: The lowest personal injury
- 2 rate of the Class I's, fewest reportable train
- 3 accidents in company history, velocity and dwell,
- 4 best in company history to the benefit of our
- 5 customers, and a recent launch of our new trip plan
- 6 compliance electronic platform for merchandise and
- ⁷ intermodal customers, which provides an unprecedented
- 8 level of transparency into our performance at an
- 9 individual shipment level. A long-term revenue
- 10 adequacy constraint would discourage this kind of
- 11 progress and create an uneven playing field as
- 12 compared to trucks who already dominate the
- 13 transportation market and enjoy the benefit of a
- 14 publicly funded highway system.
- 15 Rate ceilings would only make it more
- 16 challenging for us to win loads from overly congested
- 17 roadways, something I think we can all agree is in
- 18 the nation's public interest for railroads to do.
- 19 Members of the Board, CSX respectfully recommends
- that long-term revenue adequacy properly calculated,
- 21 should not be a -- should be only a measurement of
- 22 railroad financial health, not a vehicle for system

- wide earning regulation that will diminish incentives
- to inspire innovation, efficiency and every improving
- 3 customer service.
- 4 Having witnessed first-hand the
- 5 transformation of this railroad, I can confidently
- 6 say I'm proud to represent CSX. I come to work every
- 7 day energized and engaged because I work for a
- 8 company that's constantly seeking new ways to drive
- 9 efficiency, compete against other railroads, as well
- 10 as trucks, and invest in projects aimed at growing
- our business to serve this nation's freight
- transportation needs today and in the future.
- Thank you for your time and I'll be glad
- 14 to take questions on the topics that I've discussed.
- 15 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Gordon, you're next.
- MR. MACDOUGALL: Good afternoon. I'm
- Gordon MacDougall, appearing today on behalf of
- 18 Samuel J. Nasca. I'm the New York State Legislative
- 19 Director for the SMART Transportation Unit. And we
- 20 submitted a statement, and I'm here to tell you that
- we don't think that revenue adequacy should be a
- 22 factor in the individual rate making.

Page 156 1 And under Section 49-10701(d)(3), you're 2 supposed to look at simplified forms. And the 3 simplified way is after you get first market 4 dominance, which is the statutory requirement, then 5 we think you should go to rate comparisons, which is the standard way of setting rates at the old ICC and 6 7 at the new STB. 8 And Unreasonable Freight Rates was a 9 published book by Examiner Shen. He wrote two others 10 as well, one routing in this routing and another was 11 freight rate application. And these spoke before the 12 practitioners. He was a good examiner. They now 13 call him Administer of Law Judges. He didn't like to 14 be called Administrative Law Judges at the time. 15 And there's nothing wrong with taking 16 freight rates and comparisons and cost comparisons 17 you use as revenue variable costs, and that's not the 18 issue, actual rates. And when you go to negotiate a 19 rate, that's what you do. You go to the rate officer 20 and the shipper would say -- they'd discuss I want 21 this certain rate because it's comparable to other 22 rates by competitors.

- Or, there's some special situation.
- There's nothing wrong with that system. Revenue
- 3 adequacy was done by ICC and the STB through ex parte
- 4 increase cases. And the ICC published a
- 5 publication, 100 pages, in McGraft, with all the ex
- 6 parte increases ever since Louie Brandeis in 1914,
- 7 the 5 percent case all the way up to Ex Parte 267
- 8 back in 1971.
- 9 And to get it, add over there it's 100
- 10 pages and get every case of the commodities,
- 11 citations and so forth. And we think that's what's
- 12 the best way to solve this. I'm not here to discuss
- 13 revenue adequacy from an overall revenue standpoint
- 14 of the railroads.
- That's something else. That's what you
- 16 did in this 100 page document over the years. It
- 17 varies. The interest rate can be different at
- various times. And, but the way to decide the
- 19 reasonableness of rates is without going to revenue
- 20 adequacy. That was the rule we were all trained at.
- We have traffic schools in New York, Chicago,
- Nashville, that was the rule. And it was

- 1 successful.
- 2 And revenue adequacy is something
- different, and it's not part of the individual rate
- 4 making. Now, you had staff issue a report. We're
- 5 critical of that report. It's unsigned. We used to
- 6 have ALJ's do rate cases. They put their name on it.
- And if you didn't like it, you filed exceptions to
- 8 it.
- 9 This report is sent all over the country
- 10 from people, staff, dozens of meetings and all that
- kind of stuff, all oral, apparently, all oral. And
- 12 you issued a report which is just through and through
- wrong.
- And as I say, you've abolished all of your
- 15 Administrative Law Judges, unlike the Federal
- 16 Communications Commission, or the FERC or anybody
- 17 else. You don't have a Secretary now of your agency,
- unlike other agencies.
- So, we think that the primary issue is the
- membership of the STB. You should get your own house
- in order and go back to decide rates that are
- reasonable, and there's a method to decide if rates

- 1 are reasonable. We do it by rate comparisons. We
- don't do it by fancy cost formulas.
- And to be sure, if we go back to the old
- 4 system, you may have to -- won't have as many cost
- 5 cases, but that cost case started out of 2300, the
- 6 late '30's, because there were feudal system in the
- 7 south and there was alleged to be freight raise
- 8 directed towards industrial development of the north
- 9 and not the south.
- 10 You have taken that formula and decided to
- 11 make individual rates out of it. And it hasn't
- worked. And politically, we suggest to you that to
- solve the small shipper problem, so that go back to
- 14 the way you used to do it, and the way the actual
- 15 shipper looks at it. He looks at what are the rates
- other people are paying, the way the railroad sets
- 17 rates on what other railroads are doing, and what
- other shippers are getting.
- 19 It's not an easy process, but it's -- we
- think it's the fair way, and we don't believe that
- revenue adequacy should be a factor in individual
- rate making. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Page 160 1 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you. I'm going 2 to start with just a couple of questions for CSX, if 3 you don't mind, and thank you Sean, I'm glad that you 4 go through it. We'll leave it at that. You know --5 how long have you been at CSX, just out of -- because 6 I don't want to ask you a question that would be 7 unfair. 8 MR. PELKEY: Nearly 15 years now, since 9 2005. 10 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Okay, great, then one 11 of the questions that I had was, although your 12 testimony talks about the record of CAPEX investment, 13 et cetera. But if based on our own data that we 14 have, and over from the data that our Office of 15 Economics put together, you're really right now at 16 about the same level you were in 2009. 17 And you've been investing steadily less 18 each year since 2015. And I'd like you to help us 19 understand why that is. Is it and I'll pick up from 20 what my colleagues said. Is it pressures from Wall 21 Street? Is it changes that less, I guess, maybe need 22 because of different changes and how you have been

- 1 changing your network and you know, shedding lines,
- 2 et cetera?
- But if you could just help us understand
- 4 because the same level as 2009 isn't really shocking.
- MR. PELKEY: Yeah, no, it's an important
- 6 question. And it's a very important question. I
- 7 think, you know, if we go back and we look at the
- 8 history over the last 10 years, we need to think
- 9 about it, not just in terms of dollars, but we also
- 10 need to think about it in terms of what types of
- investments are CSX making, and let's start with
- 12 track, rails, track rail, cross ties, ballast, and
- when you measure it on that level, we're doing as
- much as we've done in quite some time.
- 15 And the other thing we're doing is we're
- doing it more efficiently. So, you look at the
- 17 efficiency that we've generated on the operating
- 18 expense side. I'll tell you that we really only
- 19 scratched the surface on the capital side. So,
- 20 getting the same amount or more done to maintain the
- 21 safety and reliability of the infrastructure, and
- 22 actually spending the same or perhaps even less.

Page 162 1 So, that's the first thing. The second 2 relates to a point brought up on the last panel 3 around locomotives and freight cars as well where we 4 certainly bought a lot of locomotives in the 5 2015-2016 period. You recall that we came out of the 6 winter of 2014, all the railroads got caught short 7 and put in a lot of locomotive orders, because it was 8 a major issue at the time. When we sort of changed the operating 10 model, it began operating significantly better. We 11 have 30 to 40 percent fewer trains on our network 12 today, with about the same amount of volume we had 13 three years ago. So, we've been able to pull a lot 14 of locomotives out. 15 In fact, we have, I'll call it 2,500 16 active locomotives. We have nearly 1,200 in storage, 17 and we've actually sold some as well over the time, 18 so that locomotive and freight car investment has 19 gone down. We're in that holiday that Scott Group 20 talked about.

- And the last factor is PTC. So, PTC, over
- 22 the last 10 years has been a significant, I think for

- $^{
 m l}$ us, 2.4 billion dollar investment. We're at the
- final stages of that this year. We'll have it fully
- 3 implemented next year.
- 4 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: But if you take PTC
- out, it's still -- with it or without it, it's still
- 6 the same trend line?
- 7 MR. PELKEY: It's -- I mean it jumps
- 8 around a little bit, right? So, I wouldn't
- 9 necessarily argue that our capital spending has
- increased. Clearly, one of the reasons we're
- generating significant cash flows, is the ability to
- 12 kind of take that holiday on the rolling stock
- assets, and the reduction of PTC span.
- MR. PATELLI: Can I just add one quick
- thing? When it comes to just the core infrastructure
- that he started with, we've actually seen an uptick
- 17 since 2016. I think we have provided the Board with
- that in the past, but there actually has been up to
- 19 when it comes to core infrastructure, so a lot of
- 20 that absolute difference is to those three areas that
- 21 he focused on.
- 22 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Uptick in dollars

Page 164 1 or uptick in the amount? 2 MR. PELKEY: In miles, miles of rail. 3 The other part of your question was Number of cars. 4 related to shareholder pressures. And I think that's 5 an important one as well. I was here when we had 6 some activist pressure in 2008-2009, and one of the 7 things that they pressed us for was to invest less in 8 capital. We held our ground and we continue to 10 invest because the safety and reliability of infrastructure is critical to us. I think if you 11 12 were to do a survey of investors and say, investors, 13 what would you like the railroads to do? I think 14 overwhelmingly they would say go and find more good 15 investments. 16 That's how we generate returns for our 17 shareholders. There's only so much productivity we 18 There's only so much cost we have that can generate. 19 we can take out. And I think that's what's exciting 20 about where we are right now is we're thinking about 21 those things.

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CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN:

So, for the trend line

- $^{
 m l}$ and the holiday sort of quota, what a couple of you
- 2 have said, so could you give a projection if
- you're -- as far as how the trend line will change
- 4 over the next 5 years. Will there be an uptick? Do
- 5 you expect it still will be a downward trend? Again,
- 6 I'm not trying to ask you anything that would be
- ⁷ inappropriate to --
- MR. PELKEY: Yeah, and clearly, I've got
- 9 to be careful about providing forward guidance, but
- 10 when you think about maintenance of the
- infrastructure, we're going to continue to do it at a
- level that we're doing today. Will it be a little
- more and a little less in certain years? Probably.
- But that core maintenance, the billion or
- 15 so dollars that I talked about, should be fairly
- 16 steady. When you think about freight cars and
- 17 locomotives, I don't think you're going to see
- anywhere near the kind of spending that you saw in
- 19 2015 and '16. We will probably rebuild some
- 20 locomotives. Let's hope we're able to win some
- freight and let's hope we see growth and that we're
- 22 able to buy some freight cars to support that growth,

- 1 spend money in infrastructure and growth and
- ² capacity.
- We continue to spend money on technology,
- 4 so you know, I think that would be a good result if
- 5 we found good opportunities to invest in that had
- 6 high returns.
- 7 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: And, I'll just ask one
- 8 last quick question. At the beginning of your
- 9 testimony, I don't want to paraphrase you, but I
- 10 believe what you said, depending on what the Board
- may do with revenue adequacy, your investors may
- 12 require you to seek unrelated acquisitions? What did
- 13 you mean? Give me an example if you will.
- MR. PELKEY: Yeah, so if you think about a
- world, and perhaps this isn't what the Board is
- suggesting, right. But if you think about a world
- where the railroads are capped at their cost of
- 18 capital, an investor who invests in the railroads
- 19 knows what the maximum that they can earn is. What
- 20 return it is.
- So, let's say the cost of capital is 12
- 22 percent and the railroad is 10, they got a little

- room to go, but once they hit 12, that's it, right?
- 2 So, what they're going to say is we need more. We
- need more than that. And the only way to get more
- 4 than that in an unregulated way, would be to go and
- 5 say, hey, let's go -- it's actually to explore
- 6 technology, you know, invest in the technology
- 7 company.
- 8 Maybe even go and invest in a barge line
- 9 or get into biomedical, or whatever it might be,
- 10 right. They're going to say you're generating good
- cash flows from the railroad, go and do something
- with those that's completely unrelated and I joined
- 13 CSX when we were unraveling that and learning from
- the mistakes of the past and being able to focus just
- on the railroad has been critical. We're not
- 16 considering those types of investments unrelated to
- the railroad, but if we're capped, that's the kind of
- thing that you might hear from shareholders. Can you
- 19 take that cash? Can you invest it in something else
- or, just give it back to us, and we'll do it
- 21 for you.
- 22 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you.

Page 168 1 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I want to just quick 2 jump in to comparison groups. This is for NGFA. 3 There is some criticism I think in your testimony 4 about the use of URCS and I guess I'm wondering what 5 you see as the most appropriate basis for comparison 6 with the comparison group. Is it R/VC or is it 7 R/VTM, what is your view? 8 MS. CLARK: In the testimony today, I 9 didn't specifically refer to URCS. And we do urge 10 the Board to fix URCS and with that I'll turn over to 11 Tom here for some suggestions that we've made. 12 MR. WILCOX: Well what NGFA did in EP 665 13 Sub 2 is actually propose a modified comparison group 14 methodology. Oh, it's a modified comparison group 15 methodology that had -- actually had a revenue 16 adequacy adjustment to it. And the modifications to the two benchmark was to and various things, such as 17 18 including movements that are below 180 percent, to 19 get a true look at the market.

- I think that that was part of the main
- one. It also, from a data standpoint, just to think
- 22 back, but from a data standpoint, it would include

Page 169 all movements, so that essentially it would be a 2 plugged comparison group. You wouldn't have the --3 you know, base bar arbitration and you would be a -you'd throw all the movements that met the criteria. 5 So, but that assumed URCS as URCS and 6 revenue adequacy as revenue adequacy, both, we think, 7 can be improved. And you know, NGFA hasn't done a 8 lot of you know, empirical analysis, but you know, I don't think we disagree with some of the things we 10 heard, particularly from, you know, Professor Ellig. 11 And I think NGFA has quoted, you know, 12 favorably referred to the TRB report, in terms of 13 what they found on a number of things, so. 14 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And one thing in the 15 task force report that was related to revenue 16 adequacy, but actually not within the revenue adequacy constraint section, but on the 3B section, 17 18 about the revenue needs adjustment. And you know, 19 there's a discussion in that report about how when 20 that was formulated, you know, with RSAM over 180, 21 you would think that the benchmark rate would have to 22 be adjusted upward.

Page 170 1 And if railroads exceed what they need --2 you know, the revenue needs adjustment currently, the 3 current composition of 3B is to adjust the benchmark 4 downward. And I'm just wondering, do you have any 5 views on that dynamic? What the task force said is 6 that it just should be set at one so that there's no 7 downward. Do you have any views on that dynamic? 8 MR. WILCOX: I think the view, thinking 9 back to our comments, NGFA I think, agreed with the 10 proposal, but as to details for all that, I will have 11 to tip my fingers. 12 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Let me turn to one 13 aspect of the task force report is on simplified SAC. 14 And we've talked about, you know, honestly that the 15 RPIs -- and there's some testimony about other types 16 of simplification within the AAR testimony. 17 And the task force has that as well. 18 guess I'm wondering, from NGFA's perspective, can SAC 19 ever be automated, computerized, simplified to the 20 point of being useful? Will it continue? 21 MR. WILCOX: I think that NGFA's current 22 position is no. They've been consistently opposed to

- 1 SAC. It just doesn't work for grain movements.
- That's NGFA's belief. It's not like anybody's tried
- 3 recently, but I think there's good reasons why they
- 4 haven't tried. So, I think that's the answer I would
- 5 give you.
- 6 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And why so, some
- 7 chemical companies have brought -- that have many OD
- 8 pairs, and so they have many OD pairs, and sometimes
- 9 some of those OD pairs don't have many carloads
- 10 going. They've brought cases -- I'm not saying you
- 11 know, successful, in all -- and, but I guess I'm --
- 12 and I know that they have strong criticisms of SAC,
- on many fronts.
- So, I'm not, you know, but to the extent
- 15 those folks have found pursuing SAC to be a potential
- avenue and I presume would find that simplification
- of SAC might you know, continue to improve that
- avenue. Not saying, again, they support it
- 19 generally. Why would -- why does it work as a
- 20 potential avenue for chemical but not AG?
- MS. CLARK: Unlike the chemical industry
- which has, for the most part, very set origin and

- destination points. I mean you've got a
- 2 manufacturing facility. You've got a set number of
- 3 customers. That's not the Ag industry. In fact,
- 4 this year is a classic. We've seen the devastation
- of the crops, particularly up in the upper Midwest.
- 6 You not only have this variability when mother nature
- ⁷ hits a reset button every year, but in addition to
- 8 that, as you mentioned, SAC is very expensive, it's
- 9 very time consuming, and again, in our business,
- we're basically flipping the switch every 12 months
- 11 as a new crop comes online.
- MR. WILCOX: Yeah, I would echo that.
- What I've heard is well, if you have the, there's a
- 14 you know, low-density issue, with ag, but just the
- 15 you know, the variability with ag is what I -- the
- 16 fact that they're -- by the time a SAC case is even a
- 17 year old, two years old, their whole market has
- 18 changed. Their mix has changed. They've moved on.
- And so, that's why NGFA and its members
- 20 keep suggesting you know, shorter, you know more
- 21 compact regulatory processes where they can, you
- 22 know, get in on a short period of time, get a ruling

- 1 and move on.
- And you know, for more prescriptive, as
- opposed to reparations. You know, they want to keep
- 4 things moving, so that's a real influence for these
- 5 guys.
- 6 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Thank you very much.
- 7 I have a question for CSX, but I just wanted to know
- 8 first, if you all have a response to anything she was
- 9 saying?
- MR. PATELLI: I guess we could start with
- a group comparison approach question that you had.
- 12 On the group comparison, you know, obviously there
- was a lot of debate when 3B was announced, and there
- was an appeal and there was a huge focus on what are
- 15 the -- you know, what are the imprecisions with a
- group comparison approach.
- 17 And of course, the first thing that comes
- to mind always, is if you do a group comparison
- 19 approach, and if you do keep it truly to a similar
- commodity, you'd have an array, not unlike arrays
- that we've seen earlier today and yesterday.
- 22 And you may have some outliers, right?

- 1 And it's almost presumed, right, as soon as there is
- an outlier, oh, there's something wrong. There's
- anti-competitive behavior. And the analysis doesn't
- 4 go much further than that. And so, it's really just
- 5 the problem with the group comparison approach is you
- 6 know, they may look like outliers initially, but a
- 7 closer analysis might reveal the reasons why they're
- 8 outliers, right?
- 9 And so, that's so much of what simplified
- 10 SAC and SAC are all about is taking that closer look.
- What's really going on? Where are the densities of
- 12 the line? Is it light density? Is it heavy
- density? What's the type of traffic? What's the
- share of the total fixed costs, right?
- So, all the things that you guys have
- 16 already heard before. And then --
- 17 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: But AAR's promise
- 18 compares to spur smaller cases. I know you all say
- 19 smaller shippers. And so, it's your position that
- 20 you know, even if you have that, you know, believe
- that limitation of comparison groups, whatever is
- lost there is gained by the efficiency benefits in

- terms of the regulatory process and having, you know,
- ² accessibility for shippers. That's kind of the idea
- 3 behind the current rail position.
- 4 MR. PATELLI: I think it is. I think, you
- 5 know, Chairman Begeman, we heard you loud and clear a
- 6 number of times on the need and as you said, it even
- 7 predated you, right, post or pre-Chairman and others
- 8 have really focused on the problem of -- and the
- 9 opportunity set for, you know, smaller shippers.
- I think the most promise there is to look
- hard at the 3B construct. Again, limit it. I think
- 12 the Board was wise when they wrote up the 3B
- construct to limit it to a certain amount of damages
- 14 claims and to look at ways to make it more
- 15 approachable and also, at the same time, make it more
- 16 accurate.
- 17 And that way, I think if you refer to the
- 18 AAR letter that was sent because I think there were
- 19 some good -- I can say personally, there was some
- 20 good hard thinking behind that. And I think, you
- 21 know, there's some constructive view back there.
- 22 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: John, I'm going to

- interrupt just a moment, excuse me Patrick. But, you
- 2 know, one of the reasons that the Board moved on from
- just the 3B and proposed the final offer proposal --
- 4 decision making proposal, was I've heard time and
- 5 again that it looked -- 3B also doesn't work for the
- 6 grain shippers, you know, or a good portion of them
- because all it does is compare them to another
- 8 equally high unaffordable rate.
- 9 So, Tom, I'm wondering if you could
- 10 comment. I mean, I'm all -- if we could make 3B
- 11 better, it's not like we need to have a new method if
- 12 a current method actually works. But I'm -- if you
- would please.
- MR. WILCOX: Sure, you know.
- 15 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Remind me.
- MR. WILCOX: In ex parte 665, NGFA
- 17 proposed their alternative to 3B, their modification,
- 18 but they've also responded to the task force's
- 19 recommendations on 3B because I think NGFA as a
- whole, believes that a version of 3 benchmark could
- work.
- 22 As you said, the issue that is the

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 m l}$ sticking point is that a lot of rates, you have
- 2 across the board rate making. So, when you
- 3 challenge a -- you have a comparison group, but all
- 4 the rates are high, then all the rates are deemed
- 5 reasonable. You know, so that is why the NGFA
- 6 proposed the inclusion of comparable movements under
- 7 180 percent because that would give a more -- not
- 8 perfect, obviously, but the idea being there'd be
- 9 more reflective of the market as a whole throughout,
- 10 you know, and by including all the movements then you
- sort of see what the market is, certainly an
- imperfect market for those movements, to try to take
- a little bit of that, you know, across the board
- stuff out of the equation.
- So, that's kind of the thinking to try to
- work with 3 benchmark, knowing it's, you know, it's
- 17 not perfect, but it could be usable.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, turning to some
- 19 of the long-term revenue adequacy concepts. The
- 20 revenue adequacy period, you know, I know NGFA you
- 21 made a suggestion to alter. I noticed in the last
- 22 panel I didn't get a chance to ask that the

Page 178 1 economists went back to include the financial crisis. 2 Is it CSX's view that any long-term 3 measure has to include some sort of aspect of a 4 recession? 5 MR. PELKEY: I think it does. You know, I 6 think first when we're talking about revenue 7 adequacy, our position is clearly it's got to be 8 measured on replacement cost. We would support some 9 of the testimony in the last panel as well. 10 But in terms of the timeframe as well, I 11 think it's critical. It includes a recession. 12 you think about where we are right now, we've done 13 such a good job on efficiency, our margins are --14 you know, operating ratio is 60 percent, 40 percent 15 margins. If we were to lose, you know, 20 percent of 16 our traffic, 2 billion dollars of revenue in a year, 17 there's only so much cost we can take out and so that 18 recessionary year would be a very challenging year 19 for us, but that's part of -- when we make these long 20 lived investments, we're going to have several of 21 those cycles in the course of making that investment. 22 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: What -- I'm sure you

- 1 saw some arguments in the testimony about how the
- 2 correlation between railroad earnings and the
- 3 recession wasn't as strong as some folks might have
- 4 expected. What is your reaction to that?
- MR. PELKEY: Yeah, so I was there in 2009
- 6 and it was not a pretty sight. We woke up and found
- 7 volume was falling off a cliff, and unfortunately, we
- 8 had to start, you know, shutting shops down, cutting
- 9 shifts, reducing employees. We weren't making enough
- 10 money in order to withstand that kind of a downturn
- 11 at the time.
- Fortunately, or unfortunately, however you
- want to think about it, we have a lot of excess
- capacity, you know, perhaps overstaffed in certain
- 15 places, or inefficient would probably be a better way
- of stating it and we're able to make some reductions
- 17 that were hard, and we were able to make our way out
- of it. It's harder given how tight things are right
- 19 now for us, and how much productivity we've gained
- over that 10-year period.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And you had kind of
- 22 a chart about how CSX makes individual investment

- decisions. And you talked about that hurdle rate
- being risk adjusted. What is the cost of capital
- 3 that CSX typically uses in making its investment
- 4 decisions?
- MR. PELKEY: So, what I can't do is give
- 6 you a number. What I can do is tell you how we think
- 7 about it. We clearly look at this on a consistent
- 8 basis. We survey our bank group. We've got a
- 9 consortium of 13 banks that support CSX. We ask
- them, what would you think our cost of capital is?
- We go from one bank to the next and they give us
- different answers.
- They also all give us a range of different
- 14 inputs that can be used to determine that cost of
- 15 capital. We look at the Board's cost of capital.
- 16 All of those things are inputs that we use in order
- 17 to you know, determine what a reasonable number is.
- 18 And you know, I would say what we've learned more
- 19 than anything is that looking at it from multiple
- 20 perspectives is better than honing in on one
- methodology and saying I've got it, it's CAPM and the
- 22 risk free rate is this and the data is that.

Page 181 1 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, you go to the 2 banks and you ask them, what's our cost of capital? 3 What do you think they do? MR. PELKEY: Yeah, the banks predominantly 5 use CAPM. I think that's a commonly accepted 6 methodology. It doesn't mean as you heard on the 7 last panel that it's correct. We learned in business 8 school, we learned CAPM. We also learned multi-stage DCF and there's other methodologies out there. 10 banks tend to use CAPM because they can pull it up on 11 Bloomberg, and within a split second they can figure 12 out what the cost of capital is for any company that 13 they're researching. 14 It's the most convenient methodology. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, why do you think 16 the banks convenience for sure, but I would think 17 that, you know, the professors did it. I believe I 18 heard them say that they calculated multi-stage 19 discounted cash flow as well. 20 MR. PELKEY: Yeah. 21 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Oh, I'm sorry. 22 believe I heard the professors say that they

- 1 calculated multi-stage discounted cash point, they
- did it for many, many companies. And when I think
- 3 about it, I mean, multi-stage discounted cash flow is
- 4 a pretty simple model as well, I think. And they
- just, you know, you take your stock projections,
- 6 right, and so it doesn't strike me that that's so
- 7 hard to obtain either. And for something as
- 8 important as counter costs of capital, I guess is it
- ⁹ just convenience, or you know, why would the bank
- 10 ignore kind of the forward-looking perspective that
- is -- you know, the Board has said is important?
- MR. PELKEY: Yeah, I think convenience
- 13 certainly does have a lot to do with it. I think,
- 14 you know, additionally when you're thinking about the
- 15 multi-stage DCF, the inputs are not challenging, but
- again, I'll go back to my Bloomberg example. I'm not
- 17 aware that you can go into Bloomberg and pull a
- multi-stage DCF.
- 19 And you have to think about, you know,
- their doing this constantly all the time, and they're
- 21 trying to use something that's convenient. They do
- 22 play with it, because they recognize there are

- different methodologies out there. They also
- ² recognize that no methodology is perfect.
- The other thing that I would tell you is
- 4 that if you're an analyst, or you're an investor
- 5 looking to invest in our stock, even though in
- 6 business school they teach us the way to value a
- 7 company is to look at its future cash flows and
- 8 discount them at the cost of capital, most investors
- 9 don't do that.
- 10 Again, for convenience they use PE
- 11 multiples, or some other type of multiple. And so,
- 12 you know, again it's -- they're not perhaps as
- 13 concerned about it as we -- the company might be in
- terms of making the kind of capital investment
- decisions that we make.
- 16 And part of the reason we set the hurdle
- 17 rate higher than the cost of capital is because of
- 18 that uncertainty. Not only in whether the project
- 19 cash flows will materialize, but also what the
- 20 precise cost of capital is. And even in the Board's
- 21 calculation it changes over time.
- 22 And we're making very long-lived

- 1 investments relying on some level of cost of capital
- that is imprecise and likely to change.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Good morning. I
- 4 just have okay, it's still morning. Tom, let me ask
- 5 you a question. If we did not adopt any of the task
- 6 force proposals on the rate constraint measured on a
- 7 different comparative for railroads that were
- 8 measured in a new way on revenue adequacy, the
- 9 existing coal rate guidelines are still there.
- 10 And we now have, excuse me, two or three
- 11 railroads that we have deemed to be revenue adequate.
- 12 So, what is the situation from the shipper's point of
- 13 view about bringing CF Industries kind of case, and
- why isn't that being done?
- MR. WILCOX: Well, you're correct absent
- the task force report, you have the revenue adequacy
- 17 constraint out there. You also have -- you've taken
- comments on it in exparte 722 on what it means and
- 19 what and how it should be utilized. You had the CSX
- 20 case where, unfortunately, well -- fortunately for
- 21 CSX, they weren't revenue adequate for the whole
- 22 period in that coal case.

Page 185 1 So, the standard -- there is a standard 2 out there so to speak, but from the shipper's 3 standpoint there's a couple things. There's the usual hesitancy to file a case, a rate case at the 5 Board in terms of you know, a lot of things that 6 shippers worry about in terms of cost, and you know, retaliation and all those types of things, and 8 whether it's worth it. The other thing is that there aren't --10 there is not a body of cases that have interpreted 11 the revenue or refined the revenue adequacy 12 constraint for a long-term revenue adequate railroad. 13 You know, there's only a few cases where you know, if 14 you want to analyze how we'd go forward, you know, 15 believe me, I mean the shippers are well aware of the 16 fact that, you know, Union Pacific Railroad's been,

NS has been revenue adequate for probably

you know, revenue adequate under the Board's form

 20 a long enough time to try to use the constraint.

for a very long time.

- 21 It's just you haven't had the case where someone
- 22 feels strong enough about it to be the one to go

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- first, and try to get some more meat on the bones.
- 2 That's why your proceeding 722 I thought was, or NGFA
- 3 thought was helpful to get comments on that.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, what would
- 5 the difference be then if we adopted the new proposal
- 6 which would at least give you -- you wouldn't have to
- 7 litigate the length of time of revenue adequate,
- because we'd decide that, if we adopted this
- 9 proposal. So, and that was litigated in the CF
- 10 Industries case, or in the -- I'm sorry, in the
- 11 consumer's case there was litigation about how many
- 12 years the Board should look at.
- MR. WILCOX: Right, consumer's case. I
- 14 said CSX.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Yeah, that's what I
- 16 was -- knowing you would tighten that. And the --
- and of course there'd be a new way of measuring how
- 18 the relief would be applied if we adopted the task
- 19 force proposal. Would that make it more or less
- attractive from a shipper's point of view to bring a
- revenue adequacy, rate case?
- MR. WILCOX: Well I think yeah, obviously

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 m l}$ if the standards and the parameters were clearer,
- then an aggrieved shipper would be more likely to
- file. But then, you know, there are other factors
- 4 that are still in play as to whether that would
- 5 actually happen, you know.
- 6 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: The reason I ask is
- 7 I'm just wondering from an actual practical point of
- 8 view of a shipper getting relief, leave beside the
- 9 other things that are pending, final offers, and so
- 10 forth.
- If we adopted a proposal such as the task
- 12 force proposes on revenue adequacy, would that
- 13 provide meaningful relief to the shipping world
- compared to what we have now?
- MR. WILCOX: Compared to what you have
- 16 now, it appears to, yes. I would -- you know the
- devil is in the details, but yes. What it would also
- do, and NGFA's made this point before is, it would
- 19 create an environment to commercially settle you
- 20 know, rate disputes without going -- without
- 21 litigating.
- 22 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, it would only

- do that if the railroads perceived that it would be
- 2 easier for you to bring a rate case under the revenue
- 3 adequacy constraint. Excuse me, and therefore
- 4 motivate them perhaps.
- MR. WILCOX: Correct. It would have to be
- 6 meaningful.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But do you see this
- 8 proposal giving you a meaningful avenue of relief
- 9 that you don't have now?
- MR. WILCOX: I feel that NGFA.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: In the real
- 12 litigation world.
- MS. CLARK: As Tom said, the devil is in
- the details, but I would say that we are certainly
- open to something that is more crisp. And that
- 16 provides a faster timeline and less costly
- methodology in order to be able to bring a case
- 18 forward.
- BOARD MEMBER: Alright thanks. I have a
- question for Sean. The -- and by the way, your
- 21 graphic presentation was very helpful and clear, and
- 22 I appreciate it.

Page 189 MR. PELKEY: Thank you. 2 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: In the slide you 3 put up there on the difference in an investment of a 4 \$100,000 railcar, and you pointed out that the rate 5 for the car, you used \$2,000 hadn't changed. 6 MR. PELKEY: That's right. 7 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: And you posed the 8 question who should get the benefit of that return. MR. PELKEY: That's correct. 10 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: And so, the way you 11 posed it the answer was sort of obvious. But let me 12 ask if you add in the factor that the only reason, 13 you're able to charge \$2,000 to the shipper was 14 because that shipper happens to be captive. Then, 15 wouldn't the answer be, perhaps, that shipper 16 deserves a little bit of that 7.9 -- I can't remember 17 the number now in the slide. 18 MR. PELKEY: Yeah. 19 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Excess of return 20 over cost of capital. In other words, if you're 21 market dominant or you're predatory, or whatever the 22 standards of the statute are, enable you to get a

- 1 rate that you couldn't get if it was truly
- 2 competitive, because then the shipper gets some of
- 3 that relief and fairness.
- 4 MR. PELKEY: So, you know, at least as I
- 5 read the report, what we're trying to do here is
- 6 we're trying to say is the railroad revenue adequate?
- And if the railroad is revenue adequate, then there's
- 8 some additional level of relief that needs to be
- 9 provided to the shipper.
- In the example, what I was trying to do is
- to say here's an investment that at \$2,000 a car is
- 12 uneconomic. A return on it is below the cost of
- 13 capital. So, if CSX made those investments, and
- that made up 100 percent of its investment base, its
- 15 returns on capital would be below its cost to
- 16 capital. We would say CSX isn't revenue adequate,
- therefore, no additional rate relief triggers or
- 18 mechanisms kick in.
- So, that doesn't necessarily assume that
- the rate is reasonable, but what we're doing here is
- we're trying to tie the two concepts together and so,
- if on the left-hand side of that graph, the

- investment below the cost of capital by the Board's
- definition, would make us not revenue adequate, then
- 3 those mechanisms wouldn't kick in.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Exactly.
- 5 MR. PELKEY: On the right-hand side they
- 6 would. But does that mean that the rate itself was
- 7 unreasonable and was reasonable and now it's
- 8 unreasonable was the point I was trying to make.
- 9 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, it depends on
- we don't have all the facts, whether it's reasonable
- or not, seems to me whether a non-competitive market
- enables you to charge the rate. That's to me, one of
- the things we're supposed to be looking at. So, that
- 14 your ability to make the decision to invest is in
- part determined, as I understand it, by how much you
- 16 could charge to get your investment back.
- 17 And how much you can charge is going to
- vary depending on whether the people you're charging
- 19 are captive to some degree. I don't think anybody is
- 20 suggesting that the entire value of the additional
- investment gets taken away, but the way you posed the
- 22 question, which I thought was a fair way to pose it,

- who should get the benefit if you're making that
- 2 \$100,000 investment.
- And if you extracted benefits for the
- 4 shareholder from the shipper who has no choice, it
- 5 seems to be the answer to that question is different
- 6 as to how to divide up that benefit, maybe the
- ⁷ shipper doesn't get all of it, but what we're
- 8 struggling with is should there be some relief if
- 9 that's the situation you're in. Would you agree with
- 10 that?
- MR. PELKEY: Yes, and let me make a point
- and then I'll pass it over to John. So, I think the
- 13 concept of is the rate reasonable is different than
- the concept of is the investment making an adequate
- 15 return. And I think it would be difficult for
- 16 someone to argue that the rate is unreasonable if I
- 17 can't even invest in the car and earn an adequate
- 18 rate of return.
- 19 That doesn't mean that it's not. But I
- think, you know, more instances than not, if an
- investment isn't meeting its cost to capital, the
- 22 rate you're charging on that move to the customer is

- 1 probably not egregious. That doesn't mean absolutely
- it's not. John, do you want to?
- MR. PATELLI: Commissioner Oberman, I
- 4 think the heart of your good question is really, how
- 5 does the Board go about determining if it is an
- 6 anti-competitive environment? And it really just
- 7 keeps coming back to that over and over and over
- 8 again, I think, throughout all of the panels and from
- 9 what you've been hearing from railroads, I think
- 10 fairly consistently is it needs to be looked at on an
- individualized basis to determine if they really are
- 12 a captive shipper that fails both the quantitative
- 13 and qualitative market dominance test.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, I agree.
- MR. PATELLI: It went on to the SAC to see
- what the real situation is.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But what seems to
- be coming across from the economists that were
- 19 brought here by the railroads and by the AAR is that
- 20 somehow the task force proposal is a cap across the
- board without regard to the individual shipper. And
- 22 I raised this point yesterday and I'm focusing on it

- 1 again this morning, today.
- That you could have this construct set up
- 3 there but for a shipper to actually get relief, they
- 4 would have to first still prove that the railroad is
- 5 market dominant as to their shipment, their movement.
- 6 They can't even come in, can't get past -- they can't
- ⁷ get to us if they can't make that showing. So, yes,
- 8 there would first be some test as to whether the
- 9 shipper is captive. And then the next step would be
- 10 if they are and if you're revenue adequate, then how
- is the -- what relief, if any is provided. That's
- 12 not automatic because the formula, which I can't
- 13 repeat here, is too complicated.
- But it's still into it. It's just not an
- 15 automatic cap on the rates as I understand it.
- MR. PATELLI: Well, it's a great point and
- it's funny because we really struggled. I mean we
- 18 really did read very carefully the task force report
- 19 and it was actually refreshing to be perfectly
- 20 candid, to see that not everybody had a perfect grasp
- of it. It's not super easy to read that and then say
- well, how does that really play out practically,

- 1 right?
- And so, let me go over with you, just
- 3 really quick.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: On a personal
- 5 basis, I share what you say because I've had a
- 6 terrific economics team in my office more than once
- 7 walking me through this. It doesn't stay in there
- 8 for a long time, so that's why I've had to have it
- 9 come back.
- MR. PATELLI: Yeah.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: So, I don't
- 12 criticize anybody for not being fully comprehensive
- 13 as to how this works in the real world, but it is
- shipper by shipper determined. The Board --
- MR. PATELLI: Let's go back to that point.
- 16 So, I think it's important. So, this is how I have
- 17 come to understand it. I'd be interested to know if
- any of you have a different interpretation, but
- 19 basically you have a net surplus that's calculated by
- way of how much is the railroad earning over its cost
- of capital once it's determined that it is long-term
- revenue adequate?

Page 196 1 You would take an annual look at what the 2 net surplus is. Then you turn to allocating that net 3 surplus. And the way you allocate it is to create 4 categories and the task force report did have a 5 helpful table that laid out the categories, and you 6 would categorize it by commodity. 7 So, that is to say, an easy example is 8 coal. Over 500 miles, 50 plus car unit trains, right, that was a category. And you take your net 10 surplus, let's say for illustration purposes, 100 11 million dollars. Then the first step you do in the 12 allocation is say to yourself how much of the traffic 13 this railroad has is over 180? What percentage over 14 180 does that coal bucket get? 15 And let's just say for illustrative 16 purposes it's 10 percent, right. So, 100 million 17 dollar surplus, 10 percent associated with the coal 18 bucket, so 10 million dollars needs to be attributed 19 to that coal bucket. The next thing you do is the 20 MMM methodology. I think this is where a lot of 21 people don't always follow. They hear MMM and they 22 think it's, you know, the dark science that's

Page 197 1 difficult to follow. 2 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: It is. 3 It is, it's not MR. PATELLI: It is. 4 easy. But at the end of the day, MMM looks at that 5 bucket and it says, "What's the highest profile rated 6 traffic?" And let's say it's at 600 R/VC, just to 7 use an example, so you start there. And then you 8 say, okay, what's the second highest profile traffic? Let's say it's 500 R/VC, so then you go 10 You would actually ratchet it down and in that 11 ratcheting down, even though you're not doing it for 12 rebate purposes, or reduction purposes, you're 13 looking at that to see well how much of the 10 14 million dollars I know are attributed to this, does 15 that 10 million get reduced, right? 16 And so then, if it's reduced, if it's 17 exhausted, you're done. Once you've gotten down to 18 that 500 level. But if it's not, then you go down to 19 the next one, let's say it's 400 R/VC, right. And 20 ultimately, you just keep ratcheting down to create 21 the RIC freeze level, right. 22 And then every year, every year come back

- 1 to that and you'd see well, where are they? Maybe
- they really did succeed over an intermodal lane. Or,
- maybe they really did succeed to become more
- 4 efficient and provide better customer service. For
- instance, some of the shippers that are below the RIC
- 6 freeze level, right. Now, that RIC freeze level
- 7 keeps coming down and it keeps picking up additional
- 8 traffic, right?
- 9 And so, that RIC freeze level is acting as
- 10 a cap to the stuff that's already below it and it
- 11 keeps everything above it frozen, right. So, that
- way what the good thing you might do in your network
- over here on your left-hand can't hurt you. Can't
- come back to get you over here in the right-hand.
- 15 The whole design is really to keep the
- 16 company close or at or near the cost of capital,
- 17 right. I think that's the whole intent and the whole
- design. The last thing I'll say is back to your good
- 19 point on individualism, you know, that each one -- to
- 20 really have an impact, would take an individual case
- 21 as soon as the carrier is long-term revenue adequate.
- Just like the table showed, there would be

- 1 some publication, I would imagine. And if there
- wasn't a publication, people could come perhaps, and
- work it out themselves, but they would look at the
- 4 publication and they'd say oh, my goodness, coal, you
- 5 know, has a RIC level at 180. Or they'd say, you
- 6 know, some other commodity has a RIC level of this
- 7 other one. And that would be used time and time
- 8 again as to the railroads in negotiations. It would
- 9 not -- shippers would not wait around to only get
- 10 relief on a particular case.
- And I would adopt everything that's been
- said prior to this panel related to how carefully
- 13 both the shipper community and the railroad community
- 14 look at every single rate case. And I can assure you
- 15 personally, Ray said this yesterday, but the
- 16 railroads look at every instance where there's a rate
- 17 case type of threat, and they really do evaluate, you
- 18 know, how is this going to work if somebody brings a
- 19 rate case against us.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Do you think that
- the, excuse me, if we did nothing and I know Ray
- 22 thinks that the coal rate guidelines are illegal, but

- let's assume they're not. Yeah. Parts of them are
- illegal. Let's assume they aren't. And we did
- 3 nothing and now you have UP and S and so forth, that
- 4 are revenue adequate.
- 5 Do you think the railroad would be better
- 6 off under the current system in terms of the relief
- 7 that the Board would give in a revenue adequacy case
- 8 which isn't portioned out, but the whole thing goes
- 9 to the shipper that brings the case and then the next
- 10 shipper? Do you think -- in other words, do you --
- as I understand it, the formula that has been
- proposed by the task force, which I'm going to accept
- 13 your description of it because it sounds a lot like
- the one I've heard, but since I barely grasp it, you
- 15 know, for sake of this discussion it sounds like
- 16 you've mastered it, and I congratulate you for that.
- 17 As I understand it, the intent was to
- spread out the relief that would actually be less
- 19 intrusive on the railroad's actual performance than
- ²⁰ if we just had the current system where the rate was
- just -- first of all, the shipper might get
- 22 reparations in addition to a freeze if they succeeded

- in a revenue adequate case in a way that consumers
- didn't, but might have.
- So, I'm trying to figure out why you
- 4 think -- whether you think the current system is
- 5 better. Well, so far, they are.
- 6 MR. ATKINS: Well, I'll just take it real
- quick. I mean for one thing, no one knows what the
- 8 current system actually is. So, in the consumer's
- 9 rate case, for example, they were advocating the rate
- 10 freeze. They were not advocating that the rates be
- 11 brought down to some sort of prescribed level.
- But if you're asking generally speaking,
- what's better, a really bad idea or a bad idea, we're
- going to pick the bad idea. I mean if it's a fixed
- 15 earnings cap that drives all the rates down to the
- 16 cost of capital, that's as bad as it gets. If it's a
- 17 rate freeze, which just creates all of these
- distortions across the network above a certain
- 19 threshold, that's not a welcomed addition to the way
- that the freight rail operates, and as you've heard
- us say in prior testimony that we think actually,
- 22 there will be some unintended consequences.

Page 202 1 But even if they're not, but Member 2 Oberman, if you're saying do we take a big bad idea 3 or a little bad idea, the industry is not going to be 4 supportive just because there's this threat of some 5 catastrophic revenue adequacy constraint that you're 6 going to drop on them for doing something that we 7 just don't think is appropriate. Rather, what seems to be more appropriate 9 is to use the existing set of tools and work hard to 10 improve them, whether it's ADR, 3B, simplified SAC, 11 these are all tools that you have that are designed 12 to get at what you're worried about, which is how do 13 I determine if a financial performance is because of 14 positive, pro-competitive activity on the part of the 15 railroads, or how do I determine whether it is 16 actually a function of the exercise of market power 17 in certain pockets. 18 And you need those individualized tools. 19 You don't think these current tools meet your 20 requirements. I think you should strive to improve 21 But I don't think tying a tool tied to

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system-wide financial health, as you're currently

- 1 measuring it, is the right path.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Well, obviously
- Ray, the staff doesn't think that the proposal would
- 4 result in catastrophic damage to the railroads, they
- 5 wouldn't have proposed it obviously. We are -- no
- 6 one --
- 7 MR. ATKINS: Deeply the staff does not
- 8 deliberately advise you with proposals of that sort,
- 9 and I'm sure that the staff of the ICC pre-Staggers
- was not deliberately intending to impose regulations
- that was going to destroy the freight rail industry,
- 12 either.
- Everyone is good intentioned, it's just
- that having a trigger based on this metric, the
- 15 problem for us as Joe told you, the metric is not
- showing you what you think it's going to show you and
- you just need to be careful and cautious about
- whether there are going to be unintended consequences
- 19 either from that proposal which we appreciate their
- designing in a way to try to avoid some of the
- really significant problems with sort of, straight
- up, utility style, rate of return regulation.

Page 204 1 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Well, I just want to 2 interject for a moment. You know, as I said 3 yesterday in my intro, we have been making good use of the task force report. And what I meant by that 5 is, you know, by the various proposals that we have 6 already issued. But I don't think anything that the 7 Board has done so far was just taking the task force 8 report and proposing it. We modified it in a lot of different ways. 10 We've had a lot of different discussions about how to 11 make something work as well as we believe it could 12 work. And of course, that's why we also are having 13 notice and comment, so we can have input and hear 14 what the various stakeholders think about the 15 proposals, and we'll make modifications to the extent 16 we believe there need to be modifications. 17 And that really holds with this whole 18 exercise on the revenue adequacy matter. You know, I 19 don't view and it's more than likely the three of us 20 have different views on what the task force report 21 is pitching. I certainly didn't take it as a, you do 22 all four things.

Page 205 1 It's like -- it could be one thing. 2 could be two things, or we could come up with six 3 different things and different versions of it. So, 4 really this has been very helpful throughout the last 5 two days to get different input ideas. Now 6 obviously, an economist -- there was a wide view of 7 how good and bad and indifferent you know, there was 8 not unanimity. At least that certainly was my 9 takeaway. 10 MR. ATKINS: Chairman Begeman, let me just 11 reiterate perhaps on behalf of the whole industry, 12 how appreciative they are of the opportunity to 13 actually have these types of conversations with the 14 Board, whether it's through the ex parte rules that 15 you've opened up, but also having this hearing 16 because --17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Well no one is coming 18 in Ray. 19 MR. ATKINS: Well, I'll do my best to 20 convince more of them to come in on this subject. 21 But just to -- because the back and forth helps us 22 try to advise you on what you're hearing from staff

- 1 because my own personal experience is, having been on
- both sides of this, is that when you're just on one
- 3 side of this sort of demarcation between the agency
- 4 and the industry, your perspective is not as robust
- 5 as it is -- as you're trying to do, Chairman
- 6 Begeman, by getting the viewpoints of everyone
- ⁷ involved.
- 8 And so, I'm hopeful that you're thinking
- 9 this is as productive as the industry is in having
- 10 these conversations.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Let me just
- 12 interject quickly. What the Chairman said, really,
- goes exactly the way I view it too. You know,
- 14 articulated it well. And I would just add in and no
- 15 need to ask for questions, but I assume you all heard
- 16 my inquiries of Matt Warren in the last panel. And I
- would invite Tom and Ray to supply us with something
- 18 I think would be helpful in how we're supposed to
- 19 construe that statute about reasonable and economic
- 20 return.
- 21 I don't know that the term is such a term
- of art that they, without further, run themselves to

- 1 precise definition in terms of how we exercise our
- ² discretion.
- MR. ATKINS: Yeah, we heard the message
- and we're thankful of the opportunity.
- 5 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: And certainly, the
- 6 shipper side too, equally.
- 7 MR. WILCOX: Yeah, and I'll respond
- 8 similar to Matt. We're -- we appreciate that there's
- 9 a chance to follow-up from February 13th and we'll
- 10 give that some thought. And give you something more
- 11 substantive.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: That would be
- 13 great.
- 14 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: So, just one last
- 15 thing. And first of all, Sharon, please feel free to
- 16 excuse yourself. But my question is some of you
- 17 probably have heard me yesterday. We've been
- 18 pivoting on a few hot topics that the Board is real
- 19 interested in and one of the things I talked about
- 20 was demurrage based on -- it was prompted by some of
- the testimony and also by filings. And I will say I
- 22 was referring to your filing Tom.

Page 208 1 But I want to also point out that a number 2 of carriers Rick talked about alternative dispute 3 resolution. For years now, really ever since the 4 Board or soon after the Board tried to improve its 5 arbitration program, UP sort of opted in that they 6 would arbitrate demurrage issues. 7 After the hearing, CSX and CN have let us 8 know they would arbitrate demurrage issues, so I am 9 kind of curious as to why no one seems to -- people 10 have a lot of complaints about demurrage, and so I 11 would encourage you to explore whether or not 12 arbitration program, or an arbitration approach might 13 be helpful to some of your members. 14 And I'll just leave it at that. And thank 15 you very much. We are going to take a break until 2 16 o'clock, and we're going to start promptly at 2. 17 I'm not here, my colleagues will start it. I'm 18 teasing, I will be here. But we will start. 19 thank you. 20 (Break). 21 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: So, last but not least, 22 Panel 7, and with the standing room only left in the

- 1 room. I hope that we will make this well worth
- everyone's wait. I really am looking forward to it.
- 3 Thank you. I also want to -- so, publicly, thank the
- 4 Fertilizer Institute folks for accommodating the
- 5 previous panel who had a time constraint. You let us
- 6 do a swap and Jeff since you got to kick it off, I
- 7 thought it would be fine for you to close it too.
- But thank you for working with us. Much
- 9 appreciated. We will start with the American Fuel
- 10 and Petrochemical Manufacturers.
- MR. BENEDICT: Thank you. Thank you and
- 12 good afternoon. Chairman Begeman, Vice Chair Fuchs,
- 13 Member Oberman and Surface Transportation Board
- staff, thank you for providing us this opportunity to
- 15 testify before you today and addressing this
- important rail issue as well as many others that you
- did in the rate reform task force report.
- 18 My name is Rob Benedict, and I'm the
- 19 Senior Director of Transportation and Infrastructure
- 20 for the American Fuel and Petrochemical
- Manufacturers, also known as AFPM. We are a trade
- 22 association that represents virtually all the U.S.

- 1 refining and petrochemical manufacturing industry,
- and our members produce the fuels that drive the
- geonomy as well as the chemical building blocks that
- 4 are in millions of products that are used every day.
- 5 To produce these essential goods, we rely
- on a safe, reliable, efficient rail system to move
- 7 our materials to and from our facilities and rail
- 8 transportation is vital to our members and other
- 9 manufacturers, and ultimately the customers
- downstream that we serve and the consumers of the
- United States that demand our products.
- Last year we shipped about 3.7 million
- 13 carloads of our different types of feedstocks and
- 14 products. And I think, if I would leave you with
- 15 anything, I think what we want to do here today is
- improve the entire system. We're not trying to sway
- 17 it towards shippers or anything like that. We want
- 18 to improve the system for everybody.
- A little bit about me. My career, I've
- been focused on developing sound transportation
- 21 policy that focuses on rail transportation both in
- the government and in the private sector. So, I

- 1 understand the complex tasks you have ahead of you
- and I really appreciate you guys thoughtfully taking
- 3 comments and data from stakeholders.
- 4 At AFPM, I oversee our midstream
- operations and that predominantly has been focused on
- 6 rail, freight, transportation for the past year as
- our members kind of came to us and raised this as a
- 8 priority issue. Directly, I work hand in hand with
- 9 senior personnel in charge of logistics and
- operations at our facilities. These are refineries
- and petrochemical manufacturing facilities, and many
- of those have actually worked in the rail industry
- before they came over to our industry.
- So, the comments that they provided were
- trying to raise up the entire system as opposed to
- 16 just benefitting one party. Prior to joining AFPM, I
- worked for the government as well, as I mentioned.
- 18 And because of that I think I understand the position
- 19 you're in with this complex issue.
- What I'm not is an economist, so I'm not
- going to dive in a lot of economic theory. I can
- give you our opinion of our members, but I will refer

- 1 to our comments on some of the more specific
- 2 particulars there. I would like to highlight some of
- 3 the things our members wanted to note.
- 4 And that is first and foremost, the
- 5 healthy efficient rail system is a win for everybody.
- 6 And I think our members really want to see the
- 7 regulations that you know, have tried to keep up with
- 8 the changing industry, updated, and this is an
- 9 opportunity to do so.
- One other thing I want to mention is that
- our industry is predominantly a captive one. So, I
- 12 think all of the comments that we've provided here
- 13 are kind of in the vein of dealing with captive
- shippers for the most part. In addition, you saw
- 15 some data before today talking about a comparison of
- us with industrial and grouping a large sector of the
- industry together and I think I just want to make the
- 18 point that while industries is a very broad term,
- 19 there's a lot of differentiation in between those
- 20 different industries.
- 21 For example, based on commodity type, if
- removing hazardous materials, you might not be

- feeling those same rates -- the rate increases that
- you heard before. You might be seeing a little bit
- more. In addition, I wanted to mention that when
- 4 we're talking about infrastructure and investments
- 5 and assets, we're part of that game too.
- 6 AFPM's members are in the process of
- query our fleet of tank cars. We've also, based
- 8 on some changes in demurrage, you've heard in other
- 9 hearings, made investments to storage because we
- 10 needed to make sure our operations still work.
- But to the point at hand, I would like to
- 12 talk a little bit about the different three major
- proposals here -- the definition of long-term revenue
- adequacy, the bottleneck changes and the rate
- 15 increased constraint. I will say that we think as
- 16 AFPM that these, as well as the other proposals
- you've made, particularly the market dominance and
- 18 the final offer should all be kind of considered
- 19 together because I think with putting these all
- together, you can create an overall system that would
- work very well.
- 22 As far as the definition of long-term

- 1 adequacy, we agree with and are supportive of clearly
- defining this term, and we applaud your efforts to do
- 3 so. We do believe that the definition, as far as the
- 4 timeframe, should be lengthened and we support
- 5 broadening that definition.
- We -- while the Board's proposed approach
- ⁷ is compelling and its straight forward in its
- 8 simplicity, if the Board used the definition in some
- 9 recent cases, we feel that some railroads that would
- 10 be considered maybe revenue adequate would not have
- been under the proposal.
- 12 And as such, AFPM believes that some of
- these concerns could be addressed, particularly, if
- there was some consideration around the cost of
- 15 capital and the precise nature of that process. We
- 16 suggest in our comments tying these to various rating
- 17 agencies and perhaps a stratified scale when it comes
- 18 to those.
- With rate increase constraints, I think
- our members would support the proposal that would tie
- the raising of rates to the definition of a long-term
- 22 revenue adequate carrier, particularly when it comes

- to captive shippers. We also think that this could
- 2 be paired with a retrospective look, as far as
- 3 challenging rates which would be -- could be aided by
- 4 the streamline market dominance discussion that we
- 5 had in a previous docket.
- 6 As far as the probably, the biggest area
- of interest for our members, would be the bottleneck
- 8 changes. AFPM applauds the Board's suggestion and we
- 9 would ask that you know, the Board consider all
- 10 opinions on the financial health of the rail industry
- when considering to move forward with this.
- 12 And AFPM and AFPM members again, we feel
- 13 the network is much healthier overall than it was
- 14 when these regulations were initially brought into
- 15 place. We believe that making a through route more
- available when a carrier is found to be long-term
- 17 revenue adequate, is within the Board's statutory
- power.
- 19 And because most rail carriers are clearly
- 20 revenue adequate, we believe the suspension of the
- 21 bottleneck decisions that have essentially stopped
- 22 the throughout remedy to this point makes sense.

- 1 AFPM supports the Board's suggestion to potentially
- 2 reverse its decisions requiring the use of the
- 3 existing stringent competitive access standards to
- 4 obtain the reciprocal switching remedy.
- 5 With the regard to the stand-alone cost
- 6 changes, this was of interest, but probably of all
- ⁷ the proposals, the lowest priority for our members.
- 8 While we would support any and all efforts to kind of
- 9 make the stand-alone costs model more accessible, we
- would rather the Board focus its efforts on the other
- 11 proposals at hand.
- But we also would support some of the
- 13 comments made yesterday by ACC regarding rate
- benchmarking. So, in conclusion to be clear, the
- 15 Board's proposal to provide a really good opportunity
- to create a more healthy and efficient rail system,
- we wouldn't support proposals that we thought had the
- 18 potential to cause complications in the network.
- 19 And ultimately, if implemented properly,
- we believe these forums represent a win for the
- 21 entire rail industry and ultimately consumers. You
- 22 know, we heard a lot of talk about stocks and

- 1 returns there, but I think some consideration needs
- to be had to the effect that our movements have on
- 3 consumers in the end. With that I'll thank you and
- 4 I'll be happy to answer any questions.
- 5 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you. The
- 6 Fertilizer Institute?
- 7 MR. LOUCHHEIM: Hi. Good afternoon
- 8 Chairman Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs and Member
- 9 Oberman. My name is Justin Louchheim. I am the
- 10 Director of Government Affairs for the Fertilizer
- 11 Institute, TFI. TFI represents companies that are
- engaged in all aspects of the fertilizer supply
- 13 chain. I say this all the time, but it bears
- 14 repeating that commercial fertilizer's boost crop
- 15 yields by 50 percent, hence adds value to the farmer
- and everyone else.
- We cannot feed the current global
- population of 7.7 billion people without commercial
- 19 fertilizers. Literally, millions would starve. To
- get fertilizer to farmers, a safe, efficient and
- 21 competitive freight rail system is essential. TFI
- 22 thanks the Board for this opportunity to express the

- 1 views of its members on various regulatory reform
- 2 proposals in both this docket, and other proceedings
- 3 including EP 755 and 756.
- 4 TFI's testimony at this hearing will focus
- on bottleneck changes in the rate reform task force
- 6 report. Among the report's revenue adequacy
- 7 proposals, bottleneck reform is of greatest interest
- 8 to TFI members. Bottleneck relief would promote free
- 9 market rail transportation policies that encourage
- 10 competition in contrast to regulatory intervention.
- Anhydrous ammonia, to step back one sec
- 12 here, anhydrous ammonia is the building block of all
- 13 nitrogen fertilizers. It's the most efficient source
- of nitrogen for farmers. Unfortunately, between 2005
- and 2017, rail rates for ammonia went up over 200
- 16 percent. This is three times more than the increase
- in the system-wide average rail rate per car.
- For TFI's members, this obviously puts
- 19 tremendous pressure on the logistical operations, as
- they worked to supply their farmer customers.
- Moreover, this forces an ever greater reliance on
- 22 motor carriers for anhydrous ammonia shipments.

Page 219 The Board's various methodologies for 2 regulating rates have proven to be ineffective and 3 inaccessible due to cost, time and complexity. 4 appreciates and supports the Board's current efforts 5 to reform its rate regulatory methodologies. 6 Enhancing rail to rail competition is key. 7 A substantial amount of competition 8 potentially exists beyond bottleneck segments that 9 currently is foreclosed to shippers. In addition, 10 TFI members have suffered from multiple rail service 11 failures over the past several years. These have 12 been widely discussed over the last couple of days 13 and prior to today, prior to this week. 14 When such failures occur, our members 15 suffer the consequences with no effective remedy 16 through alternative service or compensation for the related financial damages. Although the Board has 17 18 processes for obtaining emergency service relief, 19 they simply cannot respond fast enough to be of 20 benefit to our members. Again, greater competition 21 in contrast to regulatory intervention, could 22 provide a more effective response to these service

Page 220 1 failures. 2 One of our members, one of TFI's members 3 is fortunate to have -- and this is a little unique, to have some locations in the United States where 5 reciprocal switching has been grandfathered into 6 these locations. This unique situation has allowed them to 7 8 switch traffic to Norfolk Southern during the worst moments of the CSX service failures a few years ago. 10 I know CSX has worked hard since then to iron out its 11 operations. I'm not here to bad-mouth CSX. 12 However, the point here is that broader 13 access to alternative rail service that is currently 14 foreclosed by bottleneck segments, is positive for 15 shippers and an opportunity for potential rail 16 carrier competition. This is something we should be 17 encouraging. It's a free market good principle. 18 Moreover, between these unique locations 19 in the United States and throughout Canada, where our 20 members operate extensively as well, interswitching,

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whatever you want to call it, it works smoothly and

competitive switching, reciprocal switching,

- 1 professionally. The sky has not fallen at any of
- these locations or nations.
- The message that TFI wants to convey today
- 4 is the urgent need to ease the rail bottleneck
- 5 restrictions that preclude more rail to rail
- 6 competition. There are different ways to achieve
- 7 this goal. The task force report suggests one
- 8 possibility. TFI has been an enthusiastic advocate
- 9 for another possibility through Docket 711, having
- 10 filed extensive comments and participated in exparte
- meetings, both in its own name and accompanying and
- 12 going along with TFI members as well.
- EP 711 is much further along and TFI would
- very much like to see the Board advance this
- 15 particular docket, which has been pending for 8
- 16 years, rather than restart the entire process.
- 17 However, TFI supports the concepts outlined in the
- 18 task force report, and would like to see bottleneck
- 19 relief advanced in some form.
- To step back again, a minute, you know
- 21 having listened to AAR's witnesses yesterday, also
- 22 listening to some of the economists earlier today,

- 1 I'd like to make a couple notes. About two-thirds
- of all rail stations are served by just one Class I
- ³ railroad. This is a common line. I'm sure everyone
- 4 here has heard this before and knows it.
- 5 Target system is, you know, competitive,
- 6 is indeed requires some highly theoretical economic
- 7 gymnastics, which is what I've been watching for the
- 8 past two days. A monopolistic system or duopoly,
- 9 requires government oversight and at times
- 10 intervention, if we want less government
- intervention, then we should promote rail to rail
- 12 competition.
- Bottleneck reform can get us more
- 14 competition therefore it should lead us to less
- 15 government intervention. I want to address another
- 16 point regarding a concern about single carrier spurs
- 17 not being viable if there was bottleneck performer to
- 18 occur. I think, you know, consideration of this
- 19 concern is appropriate, but I think it would be
- 20 appropriate as part of rail to shipper negotiations.
- 21 Competition, free market discussions will guide
- 22 negotiations to a sensible outcome.

- $^{
 m l}$ You know, if one of my members has a
- facility and there's a little spur there and there,
- you know, through bottleneck reform, they're going to
- 4 switch to a different line, the rail carrier with
- 5 that one spur is at liberty to tell them we can't
- 6 afford to keep that open if you're going to do this
- ⁷ or that.
- I mean that should just be part of a
- 9 normal free market conversation that could happen.
- 10 Right now, you know, these conversations aren't able
- 11 to happen. You know, also, you know, I made
- 12 reference to the morning's economists. I mean, I
- would just -- this is a little flip, and I don't want
- 14 to come across as flip, but I know it's flip. You
- 15 know, I guess apparently none of them have ever
- 16 worked for Warren Buffet, who made a big investment
- in BNSF a while ago.
- I don't think he did that blindly thinking
- 19 that it was a bad investment. So, you know, at this
- 20 point I'll turn the microphone over to TFI's counsel,
- Jeff Moreno, who will provide more details on how the
- 22 Board could approach bottleneck reform.

Page 224 1 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: While you're 2 sitting down, flip is good. 3 MR. MORENO: Yeah, I have some slides as 4 well. Great, thank you. I want to thank the Board 5 for holding this hearing today in particular for a 6 special reason, because if I were not here, I would 7 be dressed up in a Santa Claus suit passing out bonus 8 checks to my condominium association staff members. So, once again thank you. The rail 10 industry's testimony, both yesterday and today, has 11 hit back aggressively against the task force 12 bottleneck proposal. This is not particularly 13 surprising, given the industry's vehement opposition 14 to reciprocal switching in the ex parte 711 docket. 15 Indeed, most of the railroads have 16 submitted written testimony that accuses the task 17 force proposal of being more expansive than 18 reciprocal switching, raises nearly all the same 19 objections and even submits the very same testimony 20 that they filed on that docket. Those Chicken Little 21 arguments that the sky is falling have been addressed 22 and soundly rebutted in the opening and reply

Page 225 comments of the Shipper Coalition for Railroad 2 Competition in this EP 711 sub 1 docket, which TFI 3 was a member of the coalition, and I will not go into 4 all of those here. 5 I submit however, that if this proceeding 6 is going to rehash the same legal in fact arguments 7 that have been extensively briefed in ex parte 711, the Board should save all the stakeholders the time, money and effort required to do so again in a brand 10 new proceeding, and instead, advance ex parte 711, 11 which currently hangs in regulatory limbo. 12 The general nature of the task force 13 proposal has given the rail industry wide latitude to characterize it as broad as possible for the purpose 15 of attacking the entire concept of bottleneck 16 relief. The rail industry has exploited that lack of 17 detail, to characterize the report as concluding that 18 bottleneck relief should be available automatically, 19 simply because a railroad is revenue adequate. 20 The salient point of the report, however, 21 is that the bottleneck decisions were predicated and

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affirmed by the 8th Circuit upon a need to balance

- 1 the competing statutory goals of competition and
- revenue adequacy. And that achievement of revenue
- 3 adequacy merits rebalancing those objectives.
- I believe the purpose of this proceeding
- is to assess the accuracy of that conclusion and to
- flush out details as to how the Board might proceed
- ⁷ to reform the bottleneck rules. In that spirit, TFI
- 8 has expressed its agreement with the task force
- 9 conclusion, and proposed factors that the Board
- 10 should consider in responding to a shipper's request
- 11 for a through route that short hauls a revenue
- 12 adequate rail carrier.
- The rail industry argues that legal
- 14 precedent founded in the great northern and the
- 15 Louisville and Nashville decisions, precludes the STB
- 16 from revisiting the bottleneck decisions. The rail
- industry overstates the relevance of those 85 year
- 18 old plus decisions in today's very different rail
- 19 regulatory environment.
- 20 In prohibiting proportional rate
- challenges, the great northern decision held that the
- 22 shipper's only interest is that the charge shall be

- reasonable as a whole. But in 2000, the D.C.
- 2 Circuit challenged that conclusion in view of the
- 3 contract exception that sprang from the bottleneck
- 4 decisions, and I have on the screen a quote from that
- 5 decision in Union Pacific versus Surface
- 6 Transportation Board.
- 7 The Great Northern holding and the broader
- 8 principle that the reasonableness of its rates is to
- 9 be assessed on a through basis was based on an
- 10 understanding that the shippers only interest is
- that the charge shall be reasonable as a whole. This
- is no longer the case. By permitting a shipper to
- enter into contracts that are beyond the review of
- the Board, the Staggers Act entitles the contracting
- shipper to, as FMC, the Complainant in this case
- 16 alleged, the benefit of its bargain.
- Were its position to prevail, Union
- 18 Pacific would be in a position to recover for itself
- 19 the benefit of FMC's bargain with CSX as it could set
- 20 a rate that allowed it to obtain the difference
- between a reasonable through rate and the FMC CSX
- 22 contract price.

Page 228 1 The foregoing precedent, coupled with the 2 achievement of revenue adequacy by at least three 3 Class I railroads, sets the framework for bottleneck relief. In the bottleneck decisions, the STB adopted 5 the narrow contract exception referenced in the above 6 quote by applying that exception only to situations 7 when the bottleneck carrier could not directly serve 8 both the origin and the destination. The need to assist railroads to attain 10 revenue adequacy by enabling them to reap 11 differentially higher rates over their long haul, was 12 the 8th Circuit's rationale for affirming the 13 bottleneck decisions. Notable, at no place in the 14 appellate decision, did the 8th Circuit ever cite to, 15 much less affirm the STB's assertion that Great 16 Northern mandated the outcome of the bottleneck 17 decisions. 18 Rather, the court emphasized that the STB 19 had reasonably exercised its discretion in giving the 20 revenue adequacy objective preference over the 21 pro-competitive objectives in the statute.

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discretion can be exercised differently based upon

- different circumstances.
- I submit that at the very least therefore,
- 3 the Board can and should expand the contract
- 4 exception to all bottlenecks of a revenue adequate
- 5 carrier. Another key takeaway from this hearing
- 6 should be that the statute does not mandate
- 7 application of the anti-competitive conduct
- 8 requirements in the competitive access rules,
- 9 contrary to rail industry assertions, any more than
- 10 it mandates revenue adequacy considerations. The
- 11 Board has flexibility to exercise some discretion
- through the balancing of
- the competing rail transportation policies, and to
- 14 account for the vastly changed market conditions in
- 15 the rail industry as compared to when the competitive
- 16 access rules were adopted decades ago.
- 17 The rail industry is correct however, that
- 18 a rail carrier ordinarily is entitled to its long
- 19 haul, unless one of three enumerated exceptions
- 20 applies in the statute. They also are correct that
- 21 revenue adequacy is not expressly identified as one
- of those exceptions.

Page 230 1 But revenue adequacy clearly has been a 2 relevant factor in the Board's previous decisions as to whether and when it should exercise discretion to invoke one of those exceptions. To the extent 5 revenue adequacy has been achieved, the Board is 6 justified in reconsidering the role and impact of 7 revenue adequacy in the exercise again of its 8 discretion. If the Board does move forward separately 10 with bottleneck relief in general, as opposed to 11 reciprocal switching, TFI has offered four factors 12 for the Board's consideration of whether to 13 prescribe a through route that short hauls a carrier, 14 under the exception the task force identified in 15 10705(a)(2)(C). That exception focused its 16 attention -- states that the Board may short haul railroad when the Board decides that the proposed 17 18 through route is needed to provide adequate and more 19 efficient or economic transportation. 20 TFI proposes that a shipper be deemed to 21 satisfy this exception when it makes the following 22 four showings. The carrier must be long-term revenue

- adequate, pursuant to whatever definition the Board
- 2 may finally adopt. The definition proposed in the
- 3 task force report is conservative, which should give
- 4 the Board a high degree of confidence in the
- 5 financial health of the carriers that meet that
- 6 standard.
- Number two -- no other transportation mode
- 8 provides effective competition over the road,
- 9 essentially a market dominance determination. This
- 10 requirement relates to whether the proposed through
- 11 route is needed to provide adequate and more
- efficient or economic transportation. Competition is
- widely recognized as the best regulator of
- transportation service in the absence of
- 15 competition, the adequacy of service is likely to be
- less than optimal.
- 17 Such competition can come from other modes
- 18 in addition to other railroads. If there is affected
- 19 competition from other modes, there may be no need to
- 20 establish competition from a second rail carrier.
- Where effective competition for other modes is
- 22 lacking however, existing rail competition --

- 1 allowing existing rail competition to function, can
- enhance the adequacy and efficiency of rail
- 3 transportation.
- 4 Third, bottleneck rates are required only
- 5 to an existing interchange. I see my times up, can I
- 6 just grab for two minutes? The Board will not
- 7 require the creation of a new interchange capable of
- 8 handling the issued traffic where none currently
- 9 exist.
- 10 This acts as a check on rail industry
- 11 charges of open routing and efficiency losses. And
- 12 finally, the interchange must be operationally
- 13 feasible and safe for the traffic that would use it.
- 14 This factor would be an affirmative defense that
- would be the railroad's burden to prove. This allows
- 16 railroads to demonstrate operational feasibility
- where it truly is a concern.
- 18 If these factors bear a striking
- 19 similarity to the standards in EP 711 Docket, that is
- 20 no coincidence. Reciprocal switching is an express
- 21 exception to the long haul statute, and many of the
- 22 issues pertinent to reciprocal switch bottlenecks are

Page 233 quite naturally pertinent to bottlenecks in general. 2 TFI commends the Board for its continued 3 consideration of bottleneck relief. It is apparent from the testimony in this hearing that there is 5 substantial overlap and issues between the 6 bottleneck proposal and the task force and the 7 reciprocal switching proposals that have been 8 extensively argued in ex parte 711. Whatever the outcome of this hearing with 10 respect to bottlenecks, TFI urges the Board not to 11 rewind the clock, such that stakeholders are 12 compelled to reargue the same issues that have 13 already been teed up for decision in ex parte 711. 14 Thank you. 15 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Union Pacific? 16 MS. SANBORN: Chairman Begeman, Vice 17 Chairman Fuchs and Board Member Oberman and Board 18 staff, thanks for the opportunity to speak to you 19 today. The questions before you are very important 20 to the health and viability of the railroad industry. 21 I have been in the business of the 22 railroad for over 30 years. My time has been spent

- both in the east and the west. I've spent time at
- 2 CSX, where I was at one point Chief Operating Officer
- 3 and my time now at Union Pacific has included
- 4 positions as Regional Vice President of the west and
- 5 Regional Vice President of the north.
- 6 My present role is network planning and
- operations and the scope of my geographic footprint
- 8 is literally from coast to coast. And I hope that
- 9 does help to inform some of the conversation that we
- 10 have and back and forth that we have today. You have
- my written testimony. I'm going to have a few
- comments here to begin with, it will not just be
- 13 reading that testimony to get us started.
- The proposed bottleneck changes will make
- it harder for us to do our job. Providing reliable,
- 16 efficient service for today and investing to provide
- 17 service for tomorrow is paramount. If we cannot do
- our job well, our customers will feel it. We serve a
- 19 large variety of customers. Union Pacific alone, we
- 20 have 10,000 customers.
- We have to figure out the competing
- demands for service. Efficiently gather, move and

- $^{
 m l}$ deliver for all on a collective basis, all while
- 2 customers win or lose business, enter or exit
- markets, the overall economic heats up or cools down
- 4 and different sectors or geographies and at different
- 5 times.
- 6 We also do this in an outdoor environment.
- We like to say that we're an outdoor sport. And when
- 8 I think about increasing interchange, I think about
- 9 thinking through the seasons and some of the
- 10 challenges that come before us, associated just with
- weather and that outdoor sport.
- It's fine for us to handle 4 feet of snow
- over Donner Pass in California. It happens
- routinely, and we have equipment designed to help
- 15 clear that route and get us back in business. When 4
- 16 feet of snow hit us in Chicago, and Chicago is a good
- 17 place to reference as Member Oberman has, many times,
- during these last two days, that is a completely
- different animal, partially because or maybe mostly,
- because of the increased amount of interchange there,
- 21 right.
- 22 All railroads have to be able to improve

- 1 their service at the same time in order to clear
- through Chicago. If we increase more interchange
- 3 locations, have more and have extreme weather events,
- 4 the recovery for the customers that don't interchange
- 5 will be muted until both railroads or however many
- 6 railroads there are using that interchange location.
- Also, I want to talk about service and
- 8 investment, as my job is to manage the operating and
- 9 service plan for the company as well as for looking
- 10 at future capacity investment and other types of
- investments that I'll illustrate.
- In terms of service, we do the best we can
- to minimize variability and to move our customer's
- 14 products consistently and reliably. For that we must
- 15 have as much predictability as we can. It's best for
- our customers and best for the railroad.
- 17 A key component to minimizing variability
- and improving consistency of service is consolidating
- 19 traffic flows, and eliminating unnecessary car
- 20 handlings. By handling traffic and single line
- service, we avoid the unnecessary variability and
- inefficiency of interchange. Every unnecessary

- handling introduces inefficiency, not only for the
- 2 cars being handled, but for the cars of other
- 3 customers using the same service plan and
- 4 infrastructure along the route.
- 5 Government regulations that would give
- 6 individual shippers power to make us change
- 7 operations we have designed to accommodate the needs
- 8 of many other customers, would be harmful and
- 9 counterproductive to those customers.
- 10 From an investment perspective, our right
- 11 to provide single line service is also a critical
- 12 part of our decision making on future investment.
- 13 The predictability of traffic moving across which
- 14 lines and terminals is paramount to making any
- 15 investment.
- 16 A railroad investment, particularly new
- 17 capacity is very costly and risky. It takes many
- 18 years from concept to become operational. Investment
- 19 can evaporate as markets change. Powder River Basin
- 20 coal in Wyoming is a great example, as is fracked
- 21 sand in Wisconsin.
- 22 Being able to count on single line traffic

- 1 remaining on our network helps substantially reduce
- 2 uncertainty inherent and making the investment
- decisions. There is still no quarantee traffic will
- 4 materialize, but if it does it will move on our
- 5 lines. The Board needs to remember that investment
- 6 isn't just about new capacity. We spend billions
- 7 each year maintaining our right of way. We need to
- 8 justify that investment as well.
- 9 Government regulations that would allow
- 10 shippers to freely elect interchange versus single
- line service from year to year, would undermine any
- 12 predictability and planning either capacity or
- 13 renewal investment. If we are not investing for
- growth or maintenance, customers will feel the pain.
- 15 I'd like to take a moment or two and talk
- about how the planning process works at Union
- 17 Pacific, for both service or, creating our service
- 18 plan, as well as for capital investment. We
- 19 actually start this process for let's say calendar
- year 2020, we start this process in July or August
- where a commercial team provides a plan for what they
- 22 expect to take place by talking to their customers in

- 1 terms of volume.
- We also look at external information like
- 3 global insights. And factor in what we expect the
- 4 economy to do, and other puts and takes around
- 5 tariffs and things. So, we take this in August or
- 6 July and then it's turned over to my team, and we
- 7 flow it across our network, figure out what kind of
- 8 demand we need for locomotives and crews, where they
- 9 might be. Where they might be needed.
- So, we make decisions for all customers
- 11 affected based on these inputs, and all customers are
- 12 affected based on these inputs. From the investment
- perspective, we do similar work. We think about
- where might we be at capacity given what next year's
- operating plan looks like. Where might we be at
- 16 capacity?
- We also review projects that we justified
- 18 last year and the prior year that have not yet come
- 19 to be completed. And are they gaining the value that
- we needed and return that we needed and/or expected?
- So, we take those inputs, same inputs as
- 22 well and then think about them relative to the

- 1 capacity investment. And start new projects in 2020
- 2 based on these facts of what we believe are facts.
- This is very important for us to think about also in
- 4 our long-term planning, which is about a three to
- five year perspective, and we think about geographies
- or a network that are growing, and how we need to be
- 7 prepared for that in future investment and what kind
- 8 of triggers should we be looking for from year to
- 9 year in order to make that investment.
- Having resources in the wrong place or too
- 11 many resources that we don't need, increasing our
- 12 costs, which also flows to our customers is really
- what we try to avoid. And having as much
- 14 predictability as possible is what helps us make that
- 15 happen. Also, I want to talk a couple of minutes
- 16 about some of the remedies that I know the Board is
- 17 considering. Any leverage shippers might gain from
- 18 proposed bottleneck changes would be short lived.
- The Board has expressed interest in acting
- with an understanding of the long view. The Board
- has also expressed concern about the negotiating
- leverage of our customers. I cannot stand before you

- today and say exactly how Union Pacific would
- 2 respond in the face of those changes.
- We might decide that the cost of adapting
- 4 operations are high. But they also are outweighed by
- 5 the potential cost of reducing rates to keep traffic
- on a network. After all, not all of these costs will
- ⁷ be borne by Union Pacific. Other customers will feel
- 8 the same pain.
- 9 It is certainly possible that the
- 10 bottleneck proposal might provide some customers the
- 11 leverage the Board seeks in the short term and UP
- 12 reduces rates to keep traffic on our lines. It could
- 13 be a combination of both. But in the longer run, and
- 14 I don't think it would take very long, railroads and
- shippers would pay the price in terms of reductions
- in investment, and lower service reliability.
- 17 Railroads lowering rates or increasing
- 18 costs would have to deal with progressively lower
- 19 margins. And you've heard today and yesterday a lot
- of detail about what that might look like. I think
- of it as a pie. I think of our margin as a pie, the
- 22 amount of capital that we can actually either utilize

- 1 to invest in ourselves, or share buybacks, or
- dividends, or pay down debt.
- But the pie can shrink. If our margins
- 4 shrink, the pie shrinks. And as we talked, as you
- 5 heard talk about today, the proportion of that pie
- 6 will ever more likely go to investors as opposed to
- ⁷ investing in the network. And an ever-shrinking pie
- 8 is what results from that.
- 9 And rail industry likely, literally the
- 10 physical plant would degrade and that would impact
- all of our customers would be impacted by that. And
- 12 lastly, I want to hit on one other point and that's
- the looming, you know, future challenges in terms of
- what goes on around us in the competitive environment
- 15 that we're in.
- And one that probably doesn't get quite as
- much, we did -- somebody hit on it in the last couple
- of days here, but competitiveness from outside
- 19 forces, such as automated vehicles, changing
- domestic, international markets, trade challenges,
- those are pressures that are being applied to us even
- 22 now, and we need to be thinking about how do we

- $^{
 m l}$ maximize our investment to deal with that? And in
- 2 many cases, that's going to be in technology, which
- isn't necessarily a capacity improvement, but
- 4 nonetheless, a visibility improvement. Or, also an
- 5 improvement that allows us to compete with trucks on
- 6 the highway. Trucks that might be electric trucks or
- 7 automated vehicles. Only the most efficient
- 8 railroads who can invest in necessary maintenance in
- 9 future improvements, whatever those might be, will be
- 10 able to compete with agility in a dynamic
- 11 environment.
- Our motto is building America. We've been
- building America for over 150 years. We have faced
- many challenges and we are prepared to face the
- 15 challenges of the future and deliver for our
- 16 customers.
- MR. ROSENTHAL: Good afternoon Chairman
- 18 Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs, Member Oberman. I'd
- 19 like to thank you and the Board staff for the
- 20 opportunity to address the rail transportation task
- force proposals today. Miss Sanborn explained
- 22 certain operational and investment concerns with some

- of the proposals, and particularly the bottleneck
- 2 proposal.
- We've submitted written testimony
- 4 discussing our legal concerns with the bottleneck
- 5 proposal and the proposed rate increase constraint.
- 6 I'm not going to stand up here and repeat them.
- 7 You've heard testimony yesterday and today addressing
- 8 that and I don't think it has to be repeated. I'm
- 9 happy to take questions about it.
- 10 What I would like to say is that we
- appreciate the work that was done by the task force.
- We realize it was done in good faith to address
- important issues that should be part of the dialogue
- 14 and we want to be part of that continuing dialogue.
- Union Pacific is interested in engaging with the
- Board in exploring potential approaches to address
- 17 the needs of small shippers to have access to the
- 18 rate review process.
- We're also interested in engaging with the
- 20 Board on improving the Board's revenue-adequacy
- metric to reflect the context of the S&P performance
- 22 information that was discussed earlier today and to

- 1 reflect the fact that rail investors have
- 2 alternatives.
- With that said, again I'd like to thank
- 4 you for the opportunity to appear. Miss Sanborn and
- 5 I would like to thank you and we look forward to
- 6 answering your questions.
- 7 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you. I think
- 8 actually, Mike, I'll start with you since you are
- 9 still trying to sit down. One of the -- and really,
- 10 I want to thank everyone for their testimony.
- 11 It's -- you are, how ironic, I was going to say your
- 12 testimony always is as important as the first panel
- and with Jeff here, that's probably why, right.
- But really, throughout the last two days,
- 15 each panel has really provided unique perspectives, a
- 16 lot of common themes, a lot of differing examples, et
- 17 cetera and Mike, one of the things you mentioned
- which we certainly appreciate this, you know, for you
- 19 representing UP, you said that UP would like to work
- with the Board on various things, such as assisting
- us in finding a methodology for small rates to be
- 22 considered, some other challenges.

Page 246 1 And I believe what you said was also 2 improving the revenue-adequacy metric. And my -- I 3 appreciate the offer, so don't misinterpret my 4 question, but yet, throughout the last two days from 5 the railroad witnesses, we've been told you can't do 6 anything with a revenue-adequacy metric. Even, I 7 would say whether it's improved or not improved. 8 So, if we improve it, I don't want to put 9 words in your mouth, then you'd be more open to the 10 Board taking certain actions based on that metric, or 11 what? 12 MR. ROSENTHAL: We think the Board has a 13 role to play. The statute gives the Board a role to 14 play in assisting railroads to attain revenue 15 adequacy. We think that you need a good metric to do 16 that. We think that in interpreting and applying 17 other portions of the statute, you're supposed to 18 give consideration to that policy, and you see that 19 issue weighed in decisions. How does revenue 20 adequacy play into various decisions that you make 21 where you have discretion as policy makers. 22 So, we think it's important for you to

- 1 have a metric that you can use that actually does as
- ² accurately as possible, and we heard the testimony
- yesterday and especially earlier today on how
- 4 difficult it is to obtain accuracy, but to get you
- 5 the best information possible. Because you're making
- 6 decisions based on a premise of whether the railroads
- ⁷ are revenue adequate or not.
- That's why we're here. So, you need to
- 9 have the best metric available to decide whether
- there is an issue or there isn't because the statute
- 11 requires you to look at that and because you do that
- 12 as part of implementing all of your rules.
- 13 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: It does indeed. And
- 14 you know the current metric that the Board uses, I
- mean it certainly wasn't established by any of us
- 16 here. But you know, it is what we currently are
- using and is it UP's position that the Board has
- 18 found UP revenue to meet the revenue-adequacy
- 19 definition that the percentage for many of the last
- several years, probably more between with UP and NS
- 21 and here and there, BN and here and there sometimes
- too, but is it your position that UP has not been and

Page 248 1 is not revenue adequate? 2 MR. ROSENTHAL: We think that if a proper 3 measure was applied, Union Pacific wouldn't be 4 considered revenue adequate and shouldn't be treated 5 so for your regulatory purposes. I think you saw --6 I know you saw the presentation earlier today about 7 where Union Pacific and other railroads fall in 8 comparison with other companies that we compete with 9 for capital. 10 And so, yes, we think that unless you can 11 tell where we are relative, as the professor said 12 earlier today, you have to look relative. You have 13 to look at your next best option. And we think 14 measured by that standard, based on the work we've 15 done, it wouldn't be considered revenue adequate. 16 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: And is the metric 17 really the issue of replacement cost? 18 MR. ROSENTHAL: I don't know whether the 19 metric is really the issue of replacement costs. We've talked about how difficult it might to be to 20 21 actually measure replacement costs and whether that 22 is necessarily the best way to pursue. I thought the

- 1 presentation earlier today was talking about pursuing
- 2 something that's more of a comparative approach,
- because that's actually looking at the way the
- 4 investors are thinking about things and the way the
- 5 market operates. So, I don't think we have a solid
- 6 proposal at this point for translating what you saw
- ⁷ into the revenue adequacy into a formula.
- 8 But we think that something along those
- 9 lines is worth giving more thought to and developing
- 10 because, again, that's the way we see the world
- working. And that's the world where your policies
- 12 are going to have an impact.
- 13 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Just to switch topics
- for a moment to the issue of the bottleneck. I'll
- 15 call it a proposal, from the task force, but I
- believe that your testimony -- not your verbal
- 17 testimony, but you have suggested that the Board
- doesn't have authority to make the changes that the
- 19 task force has raised. And so, I really would kind
- of like to have a dialogue, not with myself, but
- between with you and Jeff and anyone else who would
- 22 like to chime in.

Page 250 1 But you know, your both you know, very 2 skilled practicing practitioners that we are all very 3 familiar with and so, we could just kind of hear the 4 best you both have on what our legal rights or -- and 5 Jeff, I kind of asked you this yesterday as well, but 6 the obstacles that we would face. You said it's from 7 you? 8 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes, true. Well, the 9 obstacle that you're going to face is through the 10 law, through the statute because the railroad's right 11 not to be short hauled, you know, not to have to 12 interchange if it can provide single line service, 13 doesn't reflect, with all respect to Mr. Moreno, it 14 doesn't reflect a balancing of policies that could 15 change with the achievement of revenue adequacy. 16 It's something that was mandated by the 17 So, it's a right and it can't be overridden 18 except under the specific circumstances identified in 19 the statute, which are essentially that the single 20 line route is unnecessarily long, or that a through 21 route is needed to provide relief for inadequate 22 service and there's proof that there's a need for

- ¹ more efficient economic transportation.
- 2 And those standards really don't have
- anything to do with revenue adequacy, and I don't
- 4 think you could find by a rule or some sort of
- 5 presumption, that because a railroad has achieved
- 6 revenue adequacy those standards are automatically
- 7 met in a particular case.
- I think it's something you would have to
- 9 assess on a case by case method as the Board has done
- 10 in the past.
- MR. MORENO: I would just say I didn't
- make up the revenue-adequacy relevancy, it comes from
- 13 the Board's own precedent and bottleneck decisions
- and then the 8th Circuit's affirmance of the
- 15 Bottleneck decisions. As I said in my testimony, I
- don't believe that revenue adequacy, as a stand-alone
- 17 factor, necessarily qualifies for the statute. It's
- what gives the Board flexibility in how it interprets
- 19 the statute for purposes of which objectives it's
- 20 seeking to accomplish through the short-haul rule.
- And I -- the statute says what it says
- with respect to the long haul, but also that includes

- 1 the three exceptions. And I think two of them
- 2 potentially apply, the reciprocal switching -- which
- ³ we've already briefed extensively. And that one
- 4 clearly does focus on competition.
- 5 And then you have the adequate, more
- 6 efficient and economic rail transportation, which
- 7 also can be linked competition because competition is
- 8 part of what facilitates efficiency and economics.
- 9 MR. ROSENTHAL: Just because you can
- 10 appreciate the bait and asked for it. We're just
- setting the case involving -- it was the Union
- 12 Pacific FMC case where this exception to the
- bottleneck rule was actually decided it wasn't part
- of the mid-American case because that case didn't
- 15 actually present the issue.
- But that case was actually a different
- 17 case. In that case there had to be a route from
- Union Pacific interchanging with CSX to complete the
- 19 route, I believe it was CSX. And CSX had a contract
- ²⁰ rate. So, the parties agreed on the interchange
- points. There was no short hauling involved. Union
- 22 Pacific was the longest haul to the interchange point

- 1 and the question was actually the form of the rate
- whether Union Pacific had to quote a rate in a form
- 3 that could be challenged from the origin to the
- 4 interchange point, or whether it could quote a rate
- 5 that went all the way to the destination in
- 6 conjunction with the CSX rate.
- 7 And what the Board said and what the court
- 8 agreed, was that there was an interest in that case
- 9 in contrast that had to be balanced with the interest
- 10 of choosing the form of the rate in 10705. And their
- 11 revenue-adequacy concerns might have something to
- 12 play in there in the form of the rate, but it's very
- different from the single-line service bottleneck
- case where the question is the railroad's right to
- 15 the long haul and the statutory provisions that
- 16 clearly protect it, except for certain exceptions.
- Which really don't have anything to do
- with revenue adequacy and in fact, if you look at the
- 19 Board's past decisions, talking about even adequate,
- 20 more efficient and economic service, Miss Sanborn can
- tell you and already has that interchange service,
- inter-line service is going to be -- I don't want

- 1 to -- more problematic. It's going to be less
- ² efficient, less economic and that's what the Board
- 3 said in case after case when it touted the benefits
- 4 of single line service, that it was more efficient
- 5 and more economic.
- So, there might be a case, might be some
- ⁷ situation where that's not true. And you might find
- 8 that going through a case-by-case test and shippers
- 9 have tried to do that and the Entergy case was one of
- 10 them. But it's a case-by-case inquiry that has to be
- done. You can't say because railroads are revenue
- 12 adequate, we're going to absolutely presume that
- interchange service would be needed for adequate,
- 14 more efficient and economic service.
- MR. MORENO: If I can just -- I think
- there's two cases we're talking about we need to keep
- very straight what the subject matter of each case
- 18 was. There was the MidAmerican case which the task
- 19 force has cited to, and there was the FMC case, which
- 20 I put up on the screen as my slides.
- Both dealt with different aspects of the
- 22 Bottleneck decisions. The MidAmerican case was the

- 8th Circuit's affirming of the Bottleneck decisions
- with respect to a challenge that had been made by
- 3 shippers concerning the Board's balancing, so to
- 4 speak, of the competitive and the revenue-adequacy
- 5 factor.
- 6 And it's in that decision where the court
- discussed revenue adequacy and referred to the
- 8 agency's own discussion of revenue advocacy in the
- 9 Bottleneck decisions. The FMC was an appeal of a
- 10 rate case in which the contract exception had been
- applied. The contract exception was not ruled upon
- in MidAmerican, because it wasn't ripe for purposes.
- So, the first opportunity of any court to
- 14 rule on whether the contract exception was lawful or
- 15 not, was in the FMC case, and the quote that I put up
- on the screen was with respect to that aspect of it.
- 17 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you both. And
- 18 Patrick did you want to?
- 19 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Sure. Jeff, let me
- 20 just start off and I think zero in. Setting aside
- the statutory framework but just from a policy
- 22 perspective, why is it that you think that it would

- be a bad idea, or if you think it's a bad idea, to
- 2 have kind of open access generally without any
- 3 conditions?
- 4 MR. MORENO: I recognize -- and I think
- 5 Congress recognized, when it passed the Staggers Act
- 6 that pure open access does create and lead to
- ⁷ inefficiencies. But there's a balance here. We're
- 8 not -- what we're talking about when we're talking
- 9 about bottlenecks, is not pure open access where we
- 10 can come in and create an interchange and direct a
- 11 routing.
- We're talking about using existing
- 13 interchanges, where that activity already takes
- 14 place. And when we are talking about bottleneck
- 15 relief, keep in mind there's two different scenarios
- in which bottleneck relief could occur.
- The one, the railroad's fans talking about
- is the one where we take single line service and turn
- 19 it into two line service. You're adding interchange,
- undoubtedly, and I don't think I can state -- sit up
- here with a straight face and say adding interchanges
- is desirable, from a shipper's perspective or from a

- railroad's or a shipper's perspective.
- 2 But if the shipper has the option of doing
- 3 so, that will lead to use of the alternative route
- 4 when it is the more efficient option. In most cases,
- 5 the bottleneck carrier is going to start out with an
- 6 efficiency advantage resulting from their single line
- 7 alternative, which is going to allow them to price
- 8 and retain more of the revenue as profit than perhaps
- 9 the competing carrier could.
- But now let's shift to the second, and
- what I think is actually probably more common
- scenario when it comes to bottleneck relief. And
- that's where we're not adding an interchange, we're
- changing the location of the interchange. And if you
- 15 look at Exhibit 2 in our TFI's written testimony, we
- 16 put several examples of those types of interchange
- 17 shifts.
- So, for example, I'll take one that comes
- 19 to mind at the top of my head. There was a
- 20 gateway -- New Orleans. A live, chemical company
- 21 shippers shipped from the southwest to points in the
- east.

- So, the traffic may originate on UP, but it's
- terminated by the Norfolk Southern or CSX, perhaps
- 3 somewhere in the mid-Atlantic or northeast.
- Well, if I'm at a chemical production
- 5 plant in Louisiana, pick St. Charles, I can -- UP,
- 6 I'm captive to UP. UP has the option because it's
- ⁷ the origin carrier of its long haul there, of taking
- 8 the traffic, usually East St. Louis is the
- 9 predominant location there. You could take it all
- 10 the way to Chicago, theoretically, to get its long
- 11 haul.
- 12 They avoid taking it to New Orleans and
- 13 handing it off to CSX or NS, which would give the
- eastern carrier the long haul in that case. But
- 15 there may be circumstances in which that's the more
- efficient routing to go, but we have no opportunity
- 17 to find that out or test that hypothesis out.
- And it's that type of competition that the
- 19 shippers are also looking for, from both a service
- and a rate perspective. So, if CSX can provide the
- long haul more efficiently for a better price, then
- we'd like the option of using CSX.

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1	UP is interchanging traffic at both
2	locations, so we're not creating a new interchange.
3	VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: But Jeff, do you
4	think that even in a location where you're not adding
5	an interchange, don't you from just a policy
6	perspective and I want to get into how it pertains to
7	particular aspects of the statute, but even when
8	you're not creating an interchange, do you think that
9	if a carrier is already in a location with another
10	carrier, there should be no other criteria, it's
11	always a good thing to have open access in that
12	scenario?
13	Or, isn't there some you were
14	describing attention between competition and revenue
15	adequacy.
16	MR. MORENO: Yeah.
17	VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And isn't there a
18	risk? I mean, you know, even in the place where
19	there's an interchange, that about revenue adequacy
20	indicating that the need for carriers to cover a
21	considerable fixed cost.
22	MR. MORENO: That's why I think revenue

Page 260 1 adequacy comes into this because there's less of a 2 need for them to do that, and this gets back to the 3 MidAmerican philosophy where the court was observing 4 that the agency had made the conclusion that the 5 railroad should be able to extend the origin 6 wherever, it should be able to extend its bottleneck 7 differential-pricing capability to the long haul. 8 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And I guess that's 9 what I'm exploring because you know, and 10 respectfully, there was discussion about kind of 11 competition and behaved more like a free market, and 12 because there were fixed costs and other things.

- 13 rail industry is just a little bit different in that
- 14 competition in every situation, even if there's not
- 15 an extra interchange, isn't necessarily a good thing.
- MR. MORENO: Yeah. And you're bringing up
- 17 a topic that came up on multiple panels yesterday.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yes.
- MR. MORENO: The difference between what
- we're talking about was bottleneck competition versus
- 21 SAC competition.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yes, yes.

Page 261 1 MR. MORENO: And I think there's --2 Professor Sappington, I think, finally cut to the 3 chase yesterday in explaining what the true 4 difference was. And that was the railroads are 5 calling SAC competition, long-term competition, 6 because it's at that level of competition that the 7 railroad can recover its total cost. 8 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yes. MR. MORENO: But then they were 10 necessarily equating bottleneck competition to short-11 term competition, which leads to marginal cross-12 pricing. Now, marginal cross-pricing is something 13 that would happen in a perfectly competitive 14 industry. But let's be realistic here. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right. 16 MR. MORENO: When we're adding bottleneck 17 competition to the equation, that's not perfect 18 competition. There's still going to be monopoly 19 profits to invest in there, that's a duopoly. 20 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right, right, but it 21 will be coming down lower beyond possibly risking. 22 MR. MORENO: I don't quite agree with

Page 262 1 that. 2 Okay. VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: 3 MR. MORENO: Because when we're talking 4 about duopoly competition, that we're assuming is 5 that the railroads are lacking in pricing discipline 6 and maybe in a perfectly competitive scenario where 7 you have 100 competitors, it's going to be difficult 8 to hold that discipline and you're going to price 9 down to the marginal cost. 10 But when we're talking about a duopoly, UP 11 and BNSF for example, when it comes to that 12 competitive, UP knows its got what its costs are and 13 BSNF knows what its costs are, and neither -- and 14 both of them can assume that the other is not going 15 to price below their cost. So, there's going to be 16 some discipline there that's going to make sure 17 they're covered. 18 Their total costs. VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: 19 MR. MORENO: Their total costs. 20 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Right. I see. And 21 so, even though it will go in the direction --22 directionally it will be less than they could if they

Page 263 1 were, you know, completely -- had the person 2 completely captive. 3 MR. MORENO: Yeah, what you're eliminating --5 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: You don't think it's 6 going to create any risk in the long run? 7 MR. MORENO: I'm sorry? VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: You don't think it's 9 going to create any risk in the long run from a 10 fixed-cost perspective because the duopoly nature? 11 No, I don't think that MR. MORENO: No. 12 will because I do think that these are disciplined 13 pricing entities. What we're seeing, a perfect 14 example of this would be -- well, the airline 15 industry. They're an oligopoly. For years though, 16 after deregulation, they did start, they were pricing 17 competitively below putting each other out of 18 business, but they now kind of settled into a routine 19 now where they're not pricing below their costs 20 anymore. They were covering everything. A rail 21 industry in a duopoly situation is going to be better 22 able to resist those temptations than even an

Page 264 1 oligopoly like the airline industry. 2 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And so, in your 3 view, where it comes to now the task force 4 recommendation comes in, is it your view that that's 5 not much of a risk without any additional criteria in 6 the interchange, but if we have an affirmative 7 declaration, that railroads are above what they need 8 on a long-term basis, then that's an additional 9 protection to make sure that there's no downside 10 risk, or not as much downside risk. 11 MR. MORENO: And the factors that TFI has 12 proposed, we'd even add an additional layer, would be 13 the market dominance test, effectively, so that we're 14 only introducing rail competition where the non-rail 15 competition that may exist is inadequate or 16 ineffective, so that's going to further constrain the 17 number of places where this might be able to occur. 18 And so, do you think VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: 19 then it is better from your perspective, and maybe

- perspective to consider competition on an
- 22 individualized basis where you have a fact-specific

just both legal and policy, is it better from your

20

Page 265 finding as if you would see in 711, compared to 2 setting aside the geographic differences between 3 bottlenecks and switching. 4 Do you think it's better to have that 5 individual fact specific, or to have that 6 over-arching long-term revenue adequacy protection? 7 MR. MORENO: Well, I think there's some 8 combination of the two. Because in the factors, one 9 of the factors would be the long-term revenue 10 adequacy of the carrier that you're short-hauling. 11 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Even in 11102 12 situation? 13 MR. MORENO: Are you talking about 14 reciprocal switching? 15 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yeah, I guess what 16 I'm asking is it a fact-specific finding on the 17 individual route like you would see in 711, or this 18 type of thing which is still it's somewhat -- but 19 it's really based on a long-term revenue adequacy 20 that creates the opening. 21 MR. MORENO: Because reciprocal switching 22 is already a subset of bottleneck, I don't see a

- 1 revenue-adequacy constraint as being necessary for
- that situation. I'm suggesting the revenue adequacy
- in the (c)(3) exception as an additional check along
- 4 with the market dominance requirement.
- 5 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: And just out of
- 6 curiosity, the (c)(3), and I know that's what the
- 7 task force put forward, there's nothing in (c)(2), in
- 8 terms of the unreasonable length that you think holds
- ⁹ any applicability?
- MR. MORENO: Oh, I think it's already --
- it almost speaks for itself in a sense because it
- 12 gives a very objective measure in that case and I
- think it's always been available, so.
- 14 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Okay.
- MS. SANFORD: Could I break in, some of
- the sort of academic discussion that we're having and
- 17 certainly the legal interpretation of some of this.
- 18 But, you know, there's certainly a practical
- 19 application, too. I mean, we're talking about a
- discrete customer that has the right to do this or
- that across a shared geography, shared
- infrastructure, shared network.

Page 267 And it's maybe instructive in some 2 respects, take an individual case and dive down into 3 it and try to bat back and forth the policy and/or legal and/or economic issues. But it's not -- I 5 can't sit here as both an operator and planner and 6 say that adding interchange locations in an 7 indiscriminate way because I have bottleneck rules 8 really is not going to impact other customers. As part of what I said in my testimony, 10 it's part of what I wrote, it's part of what I said. 11 And that's simply because interchange going up and 12 down and not being able to predict it, is terribly, 13 terribly challenging to other customers who actually 14 use that route and/or use that interchange. 15 We have backed up much more easily and 16 things don't clear as fast. And in terms of 17 interchange, you know, it's a great example, 18 interchange with CSX at St. Louis, interchange with 19 CSX at New Orleans, I know both gateways extremely 20 well. They are not the same. Going through New 21 Orleans necessitates going over two separate

22

individual properties -- the NOPB, going over the

Page 268 1 bridge, and NS's back belt. 2 There's through trains, but you have to 3 navigate those individual handoffs finding your way 4 Into St. Louis, you might use a into New Orleans. 5 TRA, you might use ANS, you have optionality for 6 either. You might actually stay online UP at Dupo 7 Yard and interchange direct to CSX at Rose Lake, if 8 that's what you choose. That could be the most efficient way. 10 having a shipper figure out which one they want to 11 use impacts dramatically what the service plan needs 12 to look like, and can actually be degrading to that 13 interchange point and other customers that really 14 must interchange through New Orleans, customers whose 15 traffic wants to go to Mobile, Alabama, which would 16 make no sense to go to St. Louis. 17 But Mobile, Alabama; Pensacola, Florida; 18 maybe even Montgomery, Alabama. Those make sense to 19 Shippers picking and choosing makes it go there. 20 very, very difficult for the others that actually

MR. MORENO: Yeah, there's two points

need to use some of these interchange points.

21

- here. I mean without getting into the debate of the
- 2 specifics of the merits of a New Orleans interchange.
- 3 Both the reciprocal switching factors and the TFI
- 4 factors include an operational feasibility component
- 5 that the railroad could raise an affirmative defense.
- 6 And the types of points that Cindy was making, that
- 7 would be the opportunity to present those arguments.
- 8 With respect to the predictability of
- ⁹ traffic flows and changing, shippers aren't changing
- 10 on a daily basis. We had testimony yesterday from CP
- witnesses about it and said what happens is the
- shippers enter into contracts. And this is how the
- railroads can manage that. You get a contract, 1, 2,
- 14 3, more years and that gives you the predictability
- of that traffic flow during the time of that
- 16 contract, and all of those contracts aren't going to
- expire at the same time at the same interchange, et
- 18 cetera. Those can be managed.
- 19 Also, in the 711 Sub 1 testimony, the
- shipper coalition put together, submitted the
- verified statement of John Orrison, who came -- who
- 22 retired from BNSF. Prior to that was at CSX and at

- 1 Norfolk Southern, including presented the CSX
- operating plan in the Conrail merger proceeding. And
- 3 he said railroads all the time have to deal with
- 4 volume fluctuations and make these adjustments.
- 5 And the types of adjustments that would
- 6 come from reciprocal switching and volume fluctuation
- are something that the railroads have ample tools to
- 8 manage.
- 9 MS. SANBORN: We may -- as I described, we
- 10 make this, we have to deal with changes and
- 11 customers' demands just based on demand for their
- 12 product, all the time. And geographical changes,
- weather changes, we talked about that at the very
- beginning in my testimony.
- We're adding more to that. We're creating
- 16 more uncertainty. If you create more uncertainty for
- us by definition, you will create more uncertainty
- 18 for our customers. None of us want that. This is
- 19 not about -- this is about the impacts to others, not
- simply the impacts to the person that makes the
- 21 choices.
- 22 And I don't disagree that you might have

- 1 contracts coming up for renewal at different times.
- To me, that just creates more of the bow wave? Or
- more of a way that change has potential to degrade
- 4 service to others. And as the planner, these things
- 5 are very, very important to us, to be able to provide
- 6 an efficient, consistent, reliable service product.
- 7 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: What do you say to
- 8 somebody who says that if you want to avoid those
- 9 inefficiencies for others, that you should then price
- 10 that person lower? The person that would create
- those inefficiencies. What do you say to that
- 12 argument, which I think I've heard a couple times?
- MS. SANBORN: I'm not sure I'm following
- 14 you.
- VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, I think as I
- understand, and correct me if I'm wrong. But what
- 17 you're saying is that through opening up some of the
- competition, however it may be done, that the
- 19 addition of potential interchanges is going to create
- inefficiencies for you and such that it may be an
- efficient outcome for one particular shipper, but
- 22 those inefficiencies will run down throughout the

- 1 network, so that you know, the rest of your customers
- 2 might not be as well off. That's what I understood
- you to be saying before I asked. Is that roughly
- 4 right?
- 5 MS. SANBORN: Well -- continue on
- 6 because --
- 7 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: My question is if
- you wanted to avoid those negative impacts to
- 9 those -- I've heard this come up a point, from
- 10 shippers, if you wanted to avoid those impacts you
- 11 could price then the person who would create those
- inefficiencies lower. So, yeah.
- MS. SANBORN: When I think about pricing
- decisions, you know, and I don't do -- one of the
- things I don't do is pricing, but nonetheless, let me
- try to take a stab at what you're describing. I
- 17 think that if that were the only mechanism that were
- 18 left for us to use, that would be dangerous in other
- 19 ways, too.
- It's about being able to, as I
- described, generate a positive return to make
- 22 investments. What we would like to be able to do is

- 1 have a consistent operation and if that interchange
- 2 actually needed to grow to be able to invest in that
- 3 location. And what you're describing is actually the
- 4 opposite, is that we would just figure out how to
- 5 continue to move stuff around by price, and
- 6 ultimately not operate where traffic wants to go.
- 7 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: So, sorry, what
- you're saying is even if you had the overarching
- 9 protection on a system-wide of revenue adequacy, and
- 10 there was some revenue hid from that pricing to avoid
- those inefficiencies, on that segment you would see
- 12 that you wouldn't want to necessarily invest in that
- 13 segment because you're not fully recovering that.
- Jeff, do you have a response to that?
- MS. SANBORN: Well, it's a shared network.
- 16 It's really, really hard, you know, for taking
- discrete examples and trying to dig down in and say
- this is exactly what you would do, ignores so many of
- 19 the other things are part of the decision making that
- we make for traffic that's on our lines, whether it's
- 21 planning for it or figuring out what the rates should
- 22 be.

Page 274 1 I don't see this particular conversation 2 finding its way into revenue adequacy conversation or 3 topic. Other than I guess that's how you're 4 introducing bottleneck or reducing taking away the 5 bottleneck provisions because of that. 6 But to me, I think of it just in general 7 as how would it -- revenue adequate or not, opening 8 up interchange, relieving bottleneck protections creates a spider web of things that happen and if we 10 dive into one location, and say what if this, what if 11 that, we are ignoring so many other pieces of it that 12 there's not like one solution that's going to solve a 13 particular problem, like price. 14 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: I hear you. 15 understood the big reason why price wouldn't is 16 because it degrades -- what you were describing, was 17 it degrades the investment incentives for that 18 particular area that might be subject to the policy. 19 MS. SANBORN: Again, it's shared. 20 would degrade our investment incentive for our 21 business. 22 VICE CHAIRMAN FUCHS: Yes, and Jeff?

Page 275 MR. MORENO: Part of the answer to that 2 comes in whatever the bottleneck rate is prescribed 3 at and if you're using the SAC or a cost play type of thing, you're going to protect the costing of the 5 carrier that may have lost that traffic. But I think 6 there's also an equally important factor that's being 7 overlooked in this discussion, because this has been 8 an asymmetric discussion, is that the railroad is losing traffic, but another railroad is gaining 10 traffic. 11 And that gain in traffic may promote 12 efficiencies on that carrier and the question is, 13 what's the net efficiency gain here? And competition is what allows the traffic to flow to the line where 15 the net efficiencies are the greatest. So, I think 16 overall, that's the most economically sound solution 17 that we're trying to arrive at. 18 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: I just have a 19 couple of things I wanted to sort of wrap up from 20 earlier discussions. Jeff, I didn't realize this 21 when you were here yesterday, that you represented at 22 least two parties in the CF case. And so --

Page 276 1 MR. MORENO: Yes, as a very young 2 associate. 3 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: That's okay, your 4 name is on the pleading, it goes down in the record. 5 But so, I don't know if you heard my repartee with 6 Ray yesterday on this subject. And it is true, I 7 know at the time I went back to look at it that Koch 8 did not apparently in that case, this is what I wanted to ask you about, argue that it was the --9 10 Board violated the statute by even adopting the 11 revenue adequacy standard in the coal rate guidelines 12 as AAR is now arguing. 13 And I wonder if you had any insight as to 14 what happened in that case. Was it obvious to 15 everybody that the Board had the authority? I mean I 16 imagine if it was a winning argument, Koch Brothers wouldn't have overlooked it. So, do you have any 17 18 insight into that? 19 MR. MORENO: You're asking me to dig 20 really deep into the recesses of my memory here. 21 I do remember it being an issue because the Koch 22 actually put in SAC evidence to try to make it into a

- 1 SAC case. And I remember the Board rejected saying
- it was the shipper's prerogative to choose which one,
- 3 but that's the extent of my memory.
- 4 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Alright, I take it
- on the substance of the issue you would disagree in
- 6 terms of whether we have the statutory authority to
- 7 enact a revenue-adequacy measurement.
- MR. MORENO: Absolutely, I think you do
- 9 have the authority. I argued that yesterday in my
- 10 ACC presentation and I think it's been clearly
- 11 recognized by the courts in affirming the constrained
- market pricing. It's inherent in constrained market
- 13 pricing because the entire point of rail rate
- regulation is to determine the appropriate level of
- differential pricing necessary to achieve revenue
- adequacy and no more.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Let me say on this
- subject, and I would just reiterate Mike and to you,
- 19 as well. If you have any more refined legal argument
- 20 to us as to how the statute, I forgot now, 10704 I
- 21 guess, that talks about reasonable and economic
- 22 return, how that language constrains, if it does, our

- discretion and picking these levels. I'd really like
- to see it because so far, and I'm not criticizing
- anybody, the discussion's been very general economic
- 4 principles, but we are constrained by the statute.
- Or, if we're constrained, it's likely to
- 6 the statute, and I'd like to know the insight from
- both sides here, how to construe it. I just have one
- 8 question. I'm guessing you don't have any hard
- 9 statistics, Justin, but I wonder if you had any
- insight, at least in terms of your members, because
- 11 you talked about your members having great potential
- to use bottleneck opportunities.
- 13 Any notion of how many interchange points
- 14 you're talking about? At least as it would affect
- your industries.
- MR. LOUCHHEIM: No, I do not know how many
- interchange points. I will say for our members
- operating in Canada, where they have interswitching,
- 19 I know, you know, Canada is not exactly the same as
- the system in the United States, but I think, you
- know, obviously it interconnects. And there are lots
- of similarities.

- They, I mean, they utilize it here and
- there, interswitching. But they don't use it a ton.
- 3 I think Jeff made the point that for someone who's
- 4 got the spur to a facility, they probably already
- 5 have inherent advantages to continuing to use that
- 6 and they generally do.
- 7 It's mostly utilized actually in service
- 8 situations. Lack of power or labor to move the
- 9 product.
- 10 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: You heard the
- 11 argument yesterday that we can't draw any insights
- 12 from Canada because the entire country only has 100
- interchange points and we have, I assume it's
- 14 accurate, thousands. And I'm just wondering in the
- 15 real world, though, how many times this issue would
- arise to get to these points of how many uncertain
- 17 points there are for assuming there is uncertainty
- 18 for the railroad.
- MR. LOUCHHEIM: I don't have -- I know you
- were looking for a specific answer. I don't have the
- 21 specific answer to that question. However, a common
- 22 theme that I've heard over the last two days, over

- the last three months, since the Rate Reform Task
- 2 report was released, and in other measures, actually
- in other in completely different modes, like in the
- 4 trucking industry like with truck rate reform, a
- 5 common theme that I experienced is communication from
- 6 the rail industry about how we should not do this to
- 7 change that, to update this, to reform regulations to
- 8 do that. You know, when it comes to status quo, it's
- 9 very much a message of we need to maintain the status
- quo, and there will be various reasons and
- 11 presentations put forward that are silky smooth, but
- 12 at the end of the day, it's mostly just about
- maintaining the status quo, is my experience, if I
- 14 did sum up all of it.
- So, I don't have a specific answer to
- that. I'm sure there are more interchanges in the
- 17 United States, sure bottleneck reform and updates and
- 18 modernization can absolutely work in the United
- 19 States.
- 20 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Thank you. That
- 21 was all I had.
- 22 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: The last thing I want

- 1 to comment on and really I'm going to kind of direct
- it at you, Cindy, and I really mean it in sort of --
- I have good intentions for what I'm about to say.
- But one of the things, at least for me, that I
- 5 struggle with when you try to you know, listen to all
- 6 different stakeholders, and really, you know, for
- years I've been listening to stakeholders. Not just
- 8 in this job. And you know, everyone -- I think that
- 9 everyone is trying to be honest with their regulator
- or their senator or their, you know, whoever we
- 11 happen to have been at the time.
- 12 And one of the things I really struggle
- with when it comes to what Justin said as the status
- quo theme, and I think you kind of hit the nail on
- 15 the head with that, from at least what I hear from
- the rail industry when it comes to anything the Board
- should do, which is nothing, because we need the
- 18 status quo, but yet you know, we have seen these
- 19 major operating changes imposed on your customers.
- 20 As an aside, for some of you who may not
- 21 know, Cindy was at CSX when they made their operating
- 22 changes and she lived to tell about it. It was not

- 1 an easy time for anyone involved at CSX at the
- point. And one of the nice things is I really got to
- know Cindy, and I know how smart she is and she, you
- 4 know, you'd be smart to listen to her because she
- 5 does know what she's talking about.
- But yet, as you know, you made crazy
- 7 changes. It was chaos. It was havoc. Companies
- 8 were practically being shut down, maybe some were
- 9 shut down, we just -- they just didn't call us. And
- 10 now you're at another company, not taking the same
- approach and I commend you for that and I'm holding
- 12 you to that, that you will communicate with your
- 13 customers, you're not going to create havoc and shut
- 14 places down, but yet no more unit -- I'm going to
- 15 kind of embellish.
- But, you now, no more unit trains for all
- 17 these folks that, you know, spent millions of dollars
- 18 to create unit train operations for their facilities.
- 19 So, it seems that the industry is fine for change as
- long as it's their change, and maybe unpredictable
- 21 for your customer but it's predictable for you. So,
- 22 it's really hard to not be suspect.

Page 283 I understand. And let me MS. SANBORN: 2 say this a couple ways. I think communication is the 3 key. And you know, I'll comment in a couple ways. One, on the unit train conversion piece. You know, 5 we still run plenty of unit trains in the industry, 6 both sides of the Mississippi. 7 The ones that we targeted that we felt 8 like made the most sense to move into manifest were 9 unit train locations where you weren't loading a 10 whole train at one time. You were loading 20 cars 11 maybe on one day and then 20 cars on the next day. 12 Just based on the physical plant that the particular 13 customer had. 14 And it took anywhere from four to five 15 days to actually generate 80 to 100 cars and then we 16 would go and respond, jump into you know, spring into 17 action and find locomotives to operate the train and find crew to operate the train. All the while a 19 local would have operated right by that facility all, 20 each of those five days and just go right by those 21 cars. 22 And so, the plan that we put in place was

- 1 for that local to pick up those cars on each
- individual day and move the cars to the manifest
- ³ network. And when you look at kind of the sum total
- 4 of that and many other changes that we've made, and
- 5 I'll speak obviously Union Pacific -- we've improved
- 6 car velocity to the point that you know, I guess --
- 7 well let me use cars per carload so that it doesn't
- 8 get impacted so much by the volume being down has
- 9 improved substantially, like 8 percent or so, just so
- 10 far in 2019. And that, with the customers owning --
- 11 70 percent of our customers own their equipment.
- 12 That's moving faster. So, it wasn't, you know, yes,
- understand the investment but there is a better
- service product, it felt like the service product
- 15 would be better.
- We dealt with our customers with those
- 17 challenges, both from a service perspective in
- 18 startup, as well as those as an infrastructure. I
- 19 mean that's a case by case basis. The other thing I
- think I do want to mention to you, and it's been part
- of what I've -- it gets back a little bit more
- 22 broadly in that particular issue. You know, just

- 1 having spent the last two days here, you know, I was
- 2 struck by some of the commentary that I heard and
- 3 probably the thing that I thought about last night
- 4 when I went back to the hotel, was one of the
- 5 statements made by the gentleman from Olin.
- And he said because I wrote it down, he
- ⁷ said I just want lower rates. And I understand that.
- 8 I get that, right? But when I think about, you know,
- 9 his example, him saying that and the other
- 10 commentary that he had. He was talking about moving
- 11 chlorine. And as I think about, as an operator, I
- will put my operator hat back on. I'm a recovering
- 13 COO, so I can't help it. I'm going to have to put it
- on every now and then.
- 15 Chlorine car comes into a hump yard and by
- 16 federal regulation on the safety side, when that car
- is progressed in an entire train that has been
- 18 progressing to the hump for cars to be gravity fed
- off at about one and a half to 2 miles in our case,
- once that chlorine car goes over that hill,
- 21 everything stops.
- 22 Because that chlorine car must go all --

- 1 navigate all the switches and find its way into its
- 2 target track and clear all the way before the next
- 3 car goes over. Normally, you would find you might
- 4 have three or four cars moving in that geography,
- 5 that component, that part of the hump yard because
- 6 you can continually slink -- put them in motion.
- So, other customers' cars stop, right?
- 8 But let me just finish and I'm happy to answer
- 9 anything you want to ask me about. That car gets
- then processed into a track. Then we build the
- outbound train. We have to stagger those cars in the
- train away from any working locomotive consist to
- protect a crew that might get on that locomotive from
- being in proximity to those cars, should something
- bad happen. That's also federally regulated.
- Now, we have a train. We're going to
- operate over a geography. When we head into a high
- 18 threat urban area, that entire train is going to
- 19 reduce its speed, if it's going faster than 40 miles
- an hour, to 40 miles an hour. Not to mention
- wherever that car goes on our system, there is going
- 22 to be PTC invested in order to protect that movement

- of that car and protect those around it.
- None of these were in effect at the time
- of the Staggers Act. All of these things we've
- 4 incurred and do so as part of our job. It's our job
- 5 to be -- to operate a safe environment. You asked,
- 6 also is the Board obsolete? And to me, I really -- I
- 7 think absolutely not, it's for all of these competing
- 8 challenges that we're talking about, right?
- 9 It's for the things that pop up managing
- 10 this chlorine car that are different than any other
- 11 car, but impact other customers as well. It's a
- 12 collective shared network. And I think that means
- that, you know, as a Board, I truly appreciate that
- 14 your phone is ringing about rates. It's ringing
- 15 about bottles, I truly appreciate it.
- But I mean, I just think we need to dig
- deep and not be swayed by, you know, making
- transportation policy decisions that feel good in the
- 19 short-term that may very likely have really negative
- effects in the long-term.
- North American railroads are the envy of
- 22 the world. Other countries wish they have what we

- 1 have, and you know, I think Mike's commentary and I
- would echo it, you know, we want to do what we can
- do to make it fair and equitable to our customers,
- 4 all of them, not one indiscrete one, and then take
- 5 something away from others.
- 6 And I think that can be done by dialogue.
- 7 I know that's part of what this proceeding is all
- 8 about. I appreciate, genuinely, the opportunity to
- 9 talk about these types of things and your willingness
- 10 to listen. And for that, so let me answer whatever
- it was that you were going to ask me.
- 12 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Honestly, I was just
- going to say there's a bit of irony in your comment
- about Frank and Olin, and Jeff you may want to chime
- in, but you know, what Frank really wanted, and again
- this was -- he didn't to go to the Birmingham hump.
- He actually wanted to cut a good portion of mileage
- off of his route when he -- ideally, you know, he'd
- 19 like a different switch. It's just that the railroad
- is forcing him to take that longer route. And so, it
- just -- there's --
- MS. SANBORN: There's the positive and

- 1 secure handoffs that we have to make with that type
- of commodity. I mean there are interchanges that are
- not manned 24/7 that that commodity simply cannot be
- 4 interchanged through.
- 5 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Right, and at this
- 6 point, he -- the example I'm giving is not in any
- 7 reference to you, Miss Sanborn.
- 8 MS. SANBORN: I understand. There's
- 9 probably exceptions to every rule. I appreciate that
- 10 too. But I see -- I just I feel very strongly we're
- in a position to, with enough frustration that we
- 12 hear, and you hear particularly, we just have to be
- very thoughtful.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Cindy, I'm sorry.
- 15 I appreciate your thoughts and obviously you're a
- 16 very knowledgeable industry expert here. But it
- doesn't kind of cap off these hearings to cite Frank
- saying, I just want lower rates. I mean the
- 19 railroads per se, we just want higher rates. So, you
- 20 know, that's really ultimately what we're here about
- and so, I don't know that that's a fair criticism.
- 22 Everybody is trying to optimize their business

- operations and you've got to live and work together
- or neither of you would survive.
- So, and that's what I think -- my answer
- 4 to the absolute question is really what you just
- 5 said. Somebody has got to balance it, or we could
- 6 all let you kill each other off.
- 7 MS. SANBORN: We're happy to have
- 8 referees. I don't think it's just about higher
- 9 rates. I think it's about fair rates and it's
- 10 allowing us to earn a return, so we can continue to
- invest in our infrastructure.
- 12 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Sure. But the
- shippers would say there are fair rates as well.
- MS. SANBORN: Well there's two sides to
- 15 every story.
- BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Exactly.
- MR. LOUCHHIEM: If I can speak to some of
- 18 those comments. And I'm sensitive to a lot of what
- 19 was just said. I mean, from, you know, there's a
- 20 chlorine site, and the TH and the toxic inhalation
- 21 chemical world, there is approximately 40 percent is
- 22 chlorine. That's not me. That's not me, that's my

- 1 counterparts in the shipping world.
- But another 40 percent would be the
- ammonia side and that is me in the fertilizer
- 4 industry. I mean, you know, we certainly
- 5 acknowledge some risk of moving TH materials, so and
- 6 we're pretty sensitive to that. We recognize that
- 7 part of that risk is going to include some additional
- 8 cost we would argue strongly that the cost paid and
- borne by shippers who, by the way, own and maintain
- 10 all the tank cars that transport these materials,
- 11 none of which are owned or maintained by the rail
- 12 industry.
- 13 And in the TH world, you know, we just
- moved, and we're moving into the interim car, to move
- 15 the materials. That is probably -- I would guess, I
- don't want to swear my life to, that's probably the
- 17 safest rail car in the world. So, you know, we pay a
- 18 lot more to ship TH materials, so it's not like we're
- definitely not trying to nickel and dime rail
- 20 carriers here at all.
- I think you know, in general I think, for
- 22 these two days, we think there should be an

- 1 assemblance of greater enhanced free-market
- 2 competitive access, but we're not trying to bankrupt
- 3 anyone or anything like that.
- 4 You know, our success is the railroads'
- 5 success as well, we don't want them going anywhere.
- 6 So, you know, I mean in 2014 for instance, for
- ⁷ shipments of ammonia, R/VC ratios greater than 180
- 8 percent, you know, we think that we paid a premium of
- 9 88 million dollars above non-TH chemical moves. So,
- other non TH things, you know, we almost paid around
- 11 you know, close to 100 million dollars additional
- just to move those materials and we pay more to route
- them around high urban areas.
- And I realize with chlorine going to water
- utilities, often they might need to go into an urban
- 16 area because those water utilities receive that
- 17 product for water and I shouldn't be talking about
- this, because that's not my industry.
- 19 But we certainly pay a great deal more to
- 20 move these materials. We recognize the risk. In our
- experience, we've been getting priced out of rail
- service, and to a large extent, that's of great

- 1 concern to us. Because, you know, if we could move
- our product by pipeline, we do. Most ammonia moves
- 3 by pipeline. After that we'll move an awful lot by
- 4 water and to the waterways, which is you know, we're
- fortunate in this country that are waterways feed
- 6 into the Corn Belt where most ammonia is used.
- But after that, you know, our next choice
- 8 is by far, is rail, which is also not -- also would
- 9 be your next safest option for various reasons. And
- so, unfortunately, we're being priced out of that by
- a lot of pressure, and we certainly use motor
- 12 carriers, everyone does.
- But, you know, we pay a lot to move our
- materials by rail, so.
- MR. BENEDICT: If I may, I just -- the
- 16 comment that, you know, we just want lower rates,
- 17 kind of bothers me. In the flammable liquids
- industry and the fuels industry, we're in a similar
- 19 boat where we're operating entire fleets. We feel
- 20 like we made a significant investment to safety and I
- think if we would leave with anything here, we just
- want a fair system and a healthy system for all.

Page 294 1 I don't think we just necessarily want 2 lower rates. That's why, you'll see some of like, 3 TFI proposed we -- they have an idea for revenue 4 adequacy, but there's some flexibility there. So, I 5 think, you know, we're willing to work but we just 6 want an even playing field for all. 7 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you. 8 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: Thank you. I'm 9 going to excuse myself, thank you and I endorse 10 whatever Ann's about to say. 11 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Hmm. 12 BOARD MEMBER OBERMAN: But Ellen will tell 13 me about that one. 14 CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: So, again, I want to 15 thank all of the participants, of course the last 16 panel, but really everyone. This has been a very 17 informative last two days. I certainly want to 18 extend my appreciation, the Board's appreciation to 19 NASA for hosting us. Thank all of you for only 20 drinking water. 21 I certainly want to thank my colleagues. 22 Thank you, Marty. Thank you, Patrick. And there is

- a long list of staff that I'm going to thank, and I
- will give the list to Ted, so that you don't have to
- worry about how to list some of these names, but if
- 4 you'll just indulge me.
- 5 Adil Gulamali, Allison Davis, Amy Ziehm,
- 6 Andy Read, Bill Brennan, Brian O'Boyle, Brian Reeder,
- 7 Chris Diamond, Coral Torres, Craig Keats, Don Sawyer,
- 8 Eden Besera, Elizabeth Webster, Emad Ahmed, Gabe
- 9 Meyer, Ian Anderson, Janie Sheng, Jon Smith, Jose
- 10 Rivera, Kim Hillenbrand, Lucy Marvin, Mike Boyles,
- 11 Mike Small, Mike Sullivan, Rachel Campbell, Raina
- 12 Contee, Regena Smith-Bernard, Rena Laws-Byrum,
- Roberta Workman, Ted, who I won't do a hearing
- without, thank you.
- 15 And our great staff who work behind us but
- 16 really, we would be nowhere without them: Lisa
- 17 Novins, Ellen Erichsen, Amanda Gorski, Val Quinn.
- 18 And just as a reminder, the record will be open until
- 19 February 13th. We look forward to your additional
- 20 submissions and really, thank all of you for your
- time, it was greatly appreciated.
- MR. MORENO: Madam Chairman, if I could

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1
    just thank you all as well. I would have to say in
2
    my career here as a result of this hearing, I have
3
    not attended a hearing where the full complement of
4
    Board members was as prepared and knowledgeable on
5
    the subject matter and engaged as this one was.
                                                         And
6
    I think that's a huge tribute to your staff as well.
7
                CHAIRMAN BEGEMAN: Thank you, Jeff.
8
                Hearing adjourned.
9
                (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at
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    3:37 p.m.)
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